DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 862 CS 208 820

TITLE Project Basic Instructional Guide, Writing Supplement.
INSTITUTION Maryland State Dept. of Education, Baltimore. Office of Project Basic.
PUB DATE Jan 84
NOTE 88p.; For a related document, see ED 202 037.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Curriculum Development; Elementary Secondary Education; State Programs; Test Construction; Testing Programs; *Writing Evaluation; *Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction; *Writing Processes; *Writing Research
IDENTIFIERS Maryland

ABSTRACT

Offered as a result of suggestions by Maryland teachers, this guide serves as an instructional reference for educators on teaching functional writing at the elementary and secondary school levels. The guide was developed as a supplement to volume one; both volumes provide a comprehensive perspective to writing improvement in Maryland. The first chapter of the guide provides a discussion of the writing process, with specific instructional suggestions for each phase of the process in order to provide a developmental approach to teaching writing. The second chapter presents the content domains Levels I and II of the Maryland Functional Writing Test (MFWT), which were provided by instructional personnel from throughout the state. In addition, the chapter contains suggestions for curricular development. The third chapter includes the 1983 version of the Level II, including test format, writing prompts, and actual student samples. The sample student papers in this chapter show scores received during modified holistic scoring along with a rationale and instructional suggestions. The tests discussed in this guide have three uses for administrators and supervisors: (1) as a base for evaluating existing writing programs, (2) as a stimulus for changing or creating writing programs, and (3) to present an occasion for school-community exchange. (EL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED254862

PROJECT BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

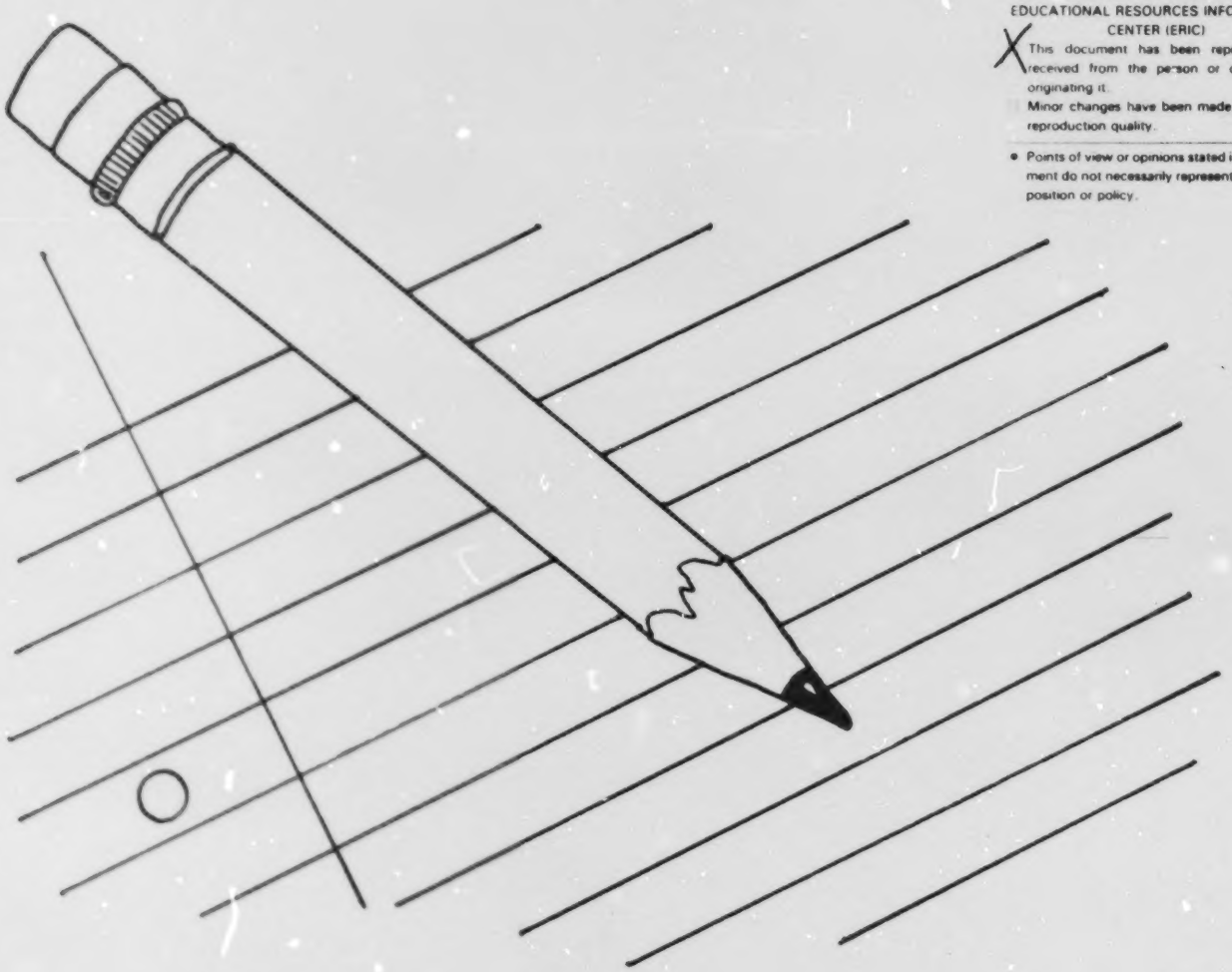
WRITING SUPPLEMENT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.



Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
1984

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G. A. Crenson

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

CS 208 890

STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Joanne T. Goldsmith President	District Heights	1985
G. George Asaki Vice President	Pasadena	1987
May B. Bolt	Frostburg	1984
Mary Elizabeth Ellis	Salisbury	1988
Herbert L. Fishpaw	Baltimore County	1987
Verna M. Fletcher	Silver Spring	1984
Rosetta G. Kerr	Baltimore City	1986
Albertine T. Lancaster	California	1986
Frederick K. Schoenbrodt	Ellicott City	1985

David W. Hornbeck
Secretary-Treasurer of the Board
State Superintendent of Schools

Joseph L. Shilling
Deputy State Superintendent of Schools

The Maryland State Department of Education does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, or handicapping condition in matters affecting employment or in providing access to programs. For inquiries related to Departmental policy, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

PROJECT BASIC INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

WRITING SUPPLEMENT

Language and Learning Improvement Branch
Division of Instruction
and
Office of Project Basic

Acknowledgements to:

Glen W. Cutlip, Chief
Language and Learning Improvement Branch

Faith Hermann
Specialist in Writing

Maryland State Department of Education
200 West Baltimore Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21201

January 1984

PREFACE

This volume, Project Basic Instructional Guide, Writing Supplement, has been developed to support the first writing instructional guide. This volume contains three chapters which used in conjunction with Volume I provide a comprehensive perspective to writing improvement in Maryland.

Chapter 1 of the Writing Supplement provides a discussion of the writing process with specific instructional suggestions for each phase of the process. This provides a developmental approach to teaching writing at the elementary and secondary level.

Chapter 2 presents the Content Domains of the Maryland Functional Writing Test (MFWT). Instructional personnel from throughout the state were asked to provide this definition to the content being tested by Levels I and II of the test. The chapter contains suggestions for curricular development as well as instructional improvement in functional writing.

Chapter 3 is the 1983 version of the Level II Maryland Functional Writing Test. Test format, writing prompts, and actual student samples are included. The sample student papers show scores received during modified holistic scoring along with a rationale and instructional suggestions. Teachers can use this information to familiarize themselves and their students with the MFWT.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Preface	i
Table of Contents	ii
Chapter	
1. Teaching Writing as a Process	1
The Writing Process	2
Diagnosing	3
Prewriting	4
Drafting	9
Revising	11
Evaluating	13
2. Content Domains for Maryland Functional Writing Test	17
Introduction	17
Level I Domain I	20
Level I Domain II	22
Level I Domain III	24
Level I Domain IV	27
Level I Domain V	28
Capitalization Rules Eligible for Testing	30
Punctuation Rules Eligible for Testing	30
Spelling Words Eligible for Testing	32
Spelling Rules Eligible for Testing	37
Usage Rules Eligible for Testing	37
Formats Eligible for Testing	38
Level II Domain I	39
Level II Domain II	40
3. Maryland Functional Writing Test 1983	42
Writing Revision Checklist	44
Narrative Domain Scoring Guide	45
Non-Scoreable Responses	46
Sample Narrative Papers	47
Explanatory Domain Scoring Guide	64
Sample Explanatory Papers	67
Using Test Results	81
Bibliography	84

CHAPTER 1

TEACHING WRITING AS A PROCESS

> **"I don't see writing as a communication of something already discovered, as 'truths' already known. Rather, I see writing as a job of experiment. It's like any discovery job; you don't know what's going to happen until you try it."**
>
> **William Stafford**

During the past ten years, writing—how we do it, how we learn it, how we teach it—has been the subject of a great deal of research.

It is practical research, for it has its roots not primarily in theory, but in observation. Successful writing techniques and programs and the people who practice them in real classrooms have been observed and studied. Their good ideas are being gathered and shared all over the country in groups like the Bay Area Writing Project.

In all the success stories, a common theme emerges: writing is a process. This guide defines and discusses the process of writing. It has something to say about product as well, but its real purpose is practical application. To that end, it includes a multitude of suggestions with examples (already tried and found successful) for creating a writing program which works.

There is also an understanding of your job as a writing teacher—a job which involves varied and sometimes opposing pressures. You have a purpose, one which you believe in: to help student writers become skilled in (1) learning what a subject means to them and (2) sharing the meaning with another person. You may also have constraints and responsibilities which can't be ignored: a minimum number of compositions, a prescribed list of written forms, departmental or system-wide requirements and guidelines.

Within all this, you want to respond to the individual needs of a student because you know that writing is a highly personal activity, yet you must be sure that you follow your district's scope and sequence, which of necessity addresses the needs of a large and varied group.

Considering Assignments

One very specific area in which these pressures come into play in the teaching of writing involves the nature of composition assignments. We know that inexperienced and unskilled writers have little or no self-confidence as they approach writing: it is not a process in which they've found much success or praise. A teacher who announces "Today we're going to write a narrative" raises their hackles and sets up defensive self-protective attitudes and behaviors. "Write?" "Narrative?" "Man, I can't even think of a topic." "Forget this."

On the other hand, if the teacher—knowing well that the product desired is a narrative—begins gradually, involving students in idea-generation and creative thinking, the teacher can break through these defenses by getting students personally involved and invested in a subject which interests them. And, if teachers respect the great variety of interests and motivations in the classroom, they are flexible in encouraging topic choice within an assignment. There is no reason to expect all 30 students want to write about the same topic, nor should the teacher be particularly excited about reading 30 papers on that topic.

Not only interest and motivation bear on this subject of assignments. The student's personal growth and development dictate ability to respond. The younger and less skilled a writer, the less able students are to deal with topics outside themselves and their experiences or to identify connections between their own experience and that of others. If students aren't encouraged to work with subjects that are comfortable and familiar and therefore important to them, they may not be able to produce.

But as students gain confidence and experience, they need encouragement in moving away from the personal. They need to write about topics outside their experience if they are to broaden their

thinking and integrate themselves within the larger world they are a part of.

The teacher must be flexible not only in creating assignments but also in prescribing them. Although structure is important, particularly in a classroom setting, too much structure restricts creativity and limits a writer's opportunity to test ideas, make errors and learn to correct them. If on every writing assignment we prescribe the length, the types of punctuation to be included, the pattern of development, and the number of main ideas to be explored, we go beyond providing security and instead inhibit the flow of ideas.

We need to extend our flexibility in dealing with a particular assignment to our writing program as a whole, insuring variety in the types of writing students do. Because so much of our experience is drawn from the kind of writing we did in college—exposition—we tend to impose too much exposition on our students. Conversely, the college experience might have made us move in the opposite direction, encouraging kids to produce endless personal pieces. Either extreme fails to address the balance students need to have in writing experiences.

Considering the Writing Environment

Making good assignments helps to create a context in which the writing process can work, but just as important is the creation of a good physical and emotional environment. At many stages of composing, writers need to get up, stretch, move around, chat a bit. Some writers like to sit, others prefer slouching, many generate ideas standing up or lying down. While some need quiet, others can produce better with music in their private headsets. And regardless of their styles, they all like to see their work displayed.

The openness of the physical setting can and should be matched by the attitudes and values we as teachers express toward writing. We show care for a personal journal, read our own writing to students, write in class as students write, display writing for everyone to share: in short, enjoy writing and let students know we value it.

THE WRITING PROCESS

"Prose is architecture, not interior design," said Ernest Hemingway. You can't hang the picture before you build the house.

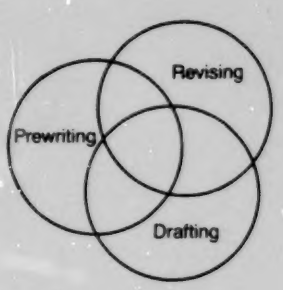
The metaphor is apt: writing is a process, a building of thoughts into a coherent whole. It begins in exploration. The writer thinks, tests, shapes, and rejects ideas. As he does so, he seeks order. His process is one of discovery, and in the course of working through the process he makes meaning.

Like most processes, writing includes a series of identifiable stages. Although opinions vary on the number of stages and their names, there is agreement that writers—even the most unskilled and inexperienced—pass through three broad phases in their work:

- Prewriting
- Drafting
- Revising.

Each of these stages has its own components, which may occur separately or simultaneously, in sequence or out.

Visually, the process might be represented by a figure comprised of three circles: the process is continuous, and its stages overlap.



Two additional stages—diagnosis and evaluation—have been added. Initially they are teaching responsibilities. However, as students gain experience with and confidence in writing, they will incorporate these stages in their own composing process.

DIAGNOSING

The local car care center offers a new service: computer diagnosis. You hook up your car, and the read-out produced tells you what's functioning as it should along with what's going wrong. The mechanic then offers a repair plan. The concept makes sense—you know what the situation is and what has to be done before you commit your money.

Diagnosing a piece of writing involves a process similar to that used by the car care center. And, done well, it produces similar results. Through careful examination and analysis of a piece of writing, a reader can

- Determine and then communicate the strengths of a piece;
- Examine the weaknesses and determine their causes;
- Suggest a strategy for strengthening the piece.

In the long term, a teacher who uses diagnosis well can also

- Train students, by example, to diagnose their own writing.

Some students dislike writing because no one has ever told them something is good about their own productions. So, diagnosis should begin with encouragement. ("You have an eye for selecting strong detail; your choice of the words _____ and _____ is so precise that I was able to see the event as you did.") Before the writer hears the inevitable "But . . . ," he has a sense of what's valuable in his writing.

When the "But . . . "s do come, as they must if the writing is to improve, they work best when they are limited to one or two major weaknesses. ("You seem uncertain about the order and number of these details. Maybe you're not clear yet as to your main idea.") Isolating and identifying only the major problems has definite advantages.

- The teacher need not call attention to every error, large and small. Lesser problems will, in fact, sort themselves out when larger ones are the focus (punctuation errors in a given sentence may, for example, disappear entirely when several sentences are re-ordered for clarity).
- Able to concentrate on one problem at a time, students are more focused, avoiding the confusion that comes from trying to do too much at one time. Research supports this point: "If poor writers learn one thing about writing per paper, that is far above the average." (Diederich, 1974)

Initially a teaching responsibility, diagnosis should in time and with practice become an integral part of the student writer's own process.

Formal and Informal Diagnosing

A variety of diagnostic tools and procedures are available to teachers. More formal tools include assigned writing samples, standardized achievement tests, attitudinal surveys, and criterion-reference tests. All these provide information from which plans for improvement of student writing can be developed.

Informal diagnostic procedures provide opportunities for more personal contact between teacher and student. In an informal conference, teachers

(1) Ask questions of a piece of writing in order to get students thinking about their own writing process. At the same time, we draw attention to specific elements common to effective writing:

- *Audience* (Who is your reader?)
- *Purpose* (What can you expect this reader to learn, feel, understand as he reads this?)
- *Focus* (What is your most important idea?)

Ideally, a set of general questions like these may be adapted by students and used to guide their own writing.

(2) Point out personal patterns of weaknesses or errors (as opposed to numerous single errors) and, with the student, plan ways to overcome them.

(3) Assess progress.

(4) Confer on the revision of specially designated parts of a paper (the introduction, for example, or the conclusion).

(5) Monitor developing skills to see how they match local scope and sequence requirements.

Using Diagnosis in the Classroom

Actual diagnostic techniques vary. Here are some suggestions, all of which have been practiced and reported to be successful:

(1) Work with models to determine strengths and weaknesses and to show how writers solve writing problems. Students might look at two pieces of writing of the same type or

two pieces dealing with the same subject, one created by a student, the other by a professional writer. Observers note specific differences—the amount of detail used by the professional to help the reader "see" the subject as he, the writer, did. "Interview" questions for the models can be developed by students and teachers and modified according to need. Students can apply these improvement techniques to their own writing.

(2) Use checklists (also called specification sheets) to increase the objectivity of the diagnostic process. As writing guides, checklists help students organize, stick to the requirements of the assignment, and avoid specific composing problems. As a diagnostic tool, checklists draw attention to specific areas (Is the main idea clear? Is the wording precise?). As part of evaluation, checklists measure the achievement of stated writing goals for an assignment.

(3) Have students create their own checklists as a basis for conference or small-group discussion of a composition. (What three things do you like about the paper? What three things do you think I should improve?)

(4) Encourage student-student diagnosis. Once students are trained to develop and ask good questions of one another's writing, they have moved a long way toward involvement with and responsibility for their own writing.

(5) Respond in peer groups. Small groups in which students share their writing with one another provide an excellent setting for diagnosing as well as for working with an individual's writing throughout the composing process.

Mary K. Healy has written a guide to setting up and monitoring peer groups in the classroom and points to a number of advantages in their use, not the least of which is enabling the teacher to give individual help to more students. In addition, in working together on the same assignments, writers observe and come to expect differences in the process as well as the product of writing. Peer response groups also provide numerous opportunities for interactions that help to develop interpersonal skills.

Finally, a word of encouragement for us all: everything does not have to happen at the beginning. Diagnosis is in reality an ongoing part of the writing process and all its goals cannot be met at once.

PREWRITING

"If you think I'm going to raise a good-for-nothing, you've got another think coming." With this warning from his mother, Russell Baker began his writing career. He sold newspapers first, got printers ink and reporting in his blood. His hundreds of articles and columns and even the books came from that. Along the way, he gathered and honed the tools of his trade: an eye for detail, a feeling for style, the desire to know, a sense of humor. All this from his mother's early admonition that she wouldn't raise a ne'er-do-well.

Defining the Process of Prewriting

From admonition, motivation. No writing emerges from a vacuum. From the motivation—something seen or heard, an experience, a smell or taste, an event—comes the spark of an idea. Then curiosity takes over. The writer explores. There's a possibility here, another there. Nothing is overlooked. Everything has potential. The trick is to worry the idea—the dog-on-bone theory—experiment with it, fool around. Keep at it "until the idea becomes a thought, the thought a coherent whole." (Murray, 1968)

All this activity, common to both skilled and unskilled writers, takes place during prewriting, the first stage in the writing process. This is the getting ready for real writing, the warm-up. Often spontaneous and tentative, seldom orderly or neat, sometimes long and sometimes loud, prewriting is also enjoyable, encouraging self-expression by imposing few limits on it. It is in prewriting that very important things happen. As writing teachers we must therefore give it much time and encouragement.

Considering the Individual

The nature of prewriting varies with the individual. Some writers seem to settle right in with their ideas without much obvious preparation. Called reflexive, these people keep their thinking to themselves, jot down a few notes, pause little during drafting. Their counterparts, the reactive writers, need lots of prewriting time to rehearse ideas and talk about them. They brainstorm, make lists, ask questions, need questions asked of them. They write in what might be described as fits and starts. During diagnosis, teachers get some idea about who's who within this range and can plan prewriting activities accordingly. But the point for

us to remember is that all writers do prewrite, despite the apparent differences in the way they go about it.

Equally important to remember is that this beginning stage should encourage discovery. Murray, in *A Writer Teaches Writing*, suggests "Teachers have to restrain themselves from providing a content, taking care not to inhibit students from finding their own subjects, form, and language. They arrange situations so that students can find that. That's what the writing process is for. Prewriting allows students to begin letting their piece of writing grow, change, develop . . . " (Murray, 1968)

Implementation

Talking is a good place to start. Talk, generated by teachers but dominated by students, gets words and ideas crystallized.

Elsa Graser reports a variety of other techniques in *Teaching Writing: A Process Approach*. From her survey of the literature, she notes three kinds of prewriting activities, each of which will be explained and illustrated:

- Using strategies
- Questioning
- Problem solving.

In addition, she offers some practical advice for classroom use of free writing and journal keeping, both excellent techniques for helping student writers become more "fluent and facile."

All the activities which follow operate from the same premises:

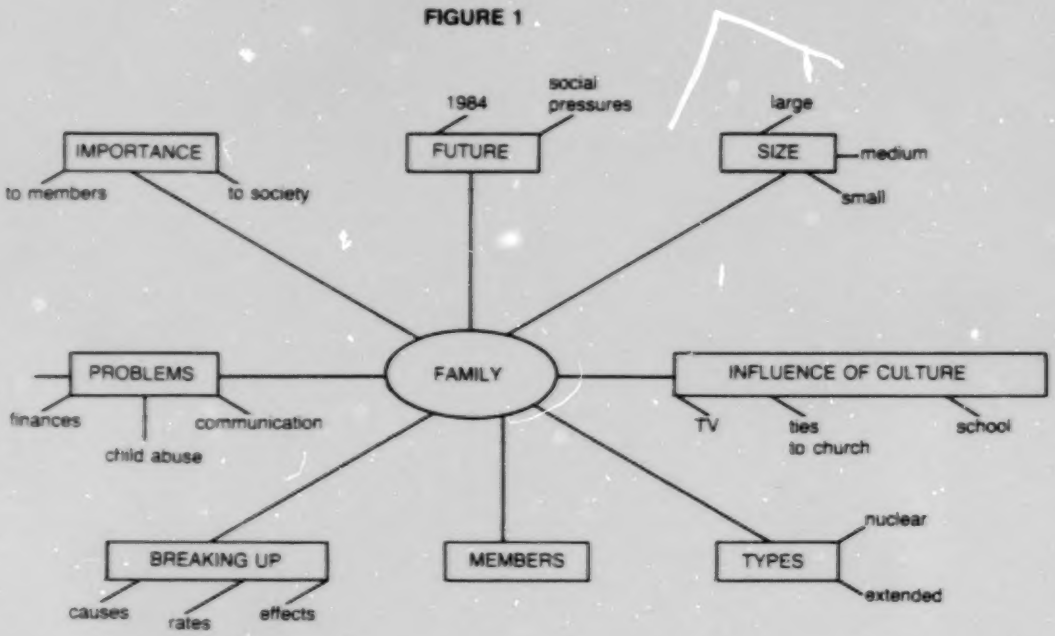
- Student writers must become aware of their world if they are to write about it.
- They must become conscious of the potential for writing in all experience.
- They must develop a "roving eye," and in so doing "move from seeing to understanding." (Murray, 1968)

Using Strategies

Referred to as heuristics in much of the literature, the following "more or less systematic devices" help the writer develop ideas and generate subject matter. (Winterowd, 1975)

1. Free associating/brainstorming is ideal for use with large and small groups. This form of nonlinear outlining encourages abundance, discourages editing. The purpose is simply to get out as many ideas as possible. For displaying the collected information, a variety of visual forms exist: clusters, circles, webs, trees. A web is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

FIGURE 1



In this web, students have drawn on their own resources to explore the core idea. Obviously, the web might go even further, but we can assume that the free-wheeling thinking process has generated additional material. Once this initial brainstorming is reasonably exhausted, the next step might be listing.

2. Listing helps writers group, classify and arrange ideas. From their brainstorming, they find patterns which begin to focus their thoughts around central ideas, moving them closer to an actual subject. Related elements are listed out (To determine a main idea, ask: which of these ideas are similar? Give those similar ideas a heading.).

Family Problems	Family Characteristics	A Family's Importance
divorce	size	social
finances	members	personal
children	types	
communication		
abuse		

Here, some order is being imposed on an amorphous topic, and potential subjects are taking shape. Lists can, in turn, be broken into sub-lists, details added, omitted, and shifted to other headings. The emphasis is still on exploration, working from abundance, probing the world immediate to the writer.

3. Visual forms like concrete poems or frames of poems, circle stories, dramatic models, help generate ideas while they create an awareness of the varieties of writing forms and structures available to the writer. See three examples below.

4. Other non-verbal forms might be used to generate ideas.

- Making metaphors—finding similarities between unlike things—helps student writers explore abstractions:

  My family runs like a militia unit.

  Our arguments are like chess matches.

- Devising extraordinary uses for ordinary objects (like a toothbrush) helps "stretch" thinking.
- Posing problems (invent ten uses for a ping-pong ball) encourages intuitive, non-logical thinking.

Most of these strategies have proven more effective than traditional outlining, which asks that writers organize their thoughts even before they have finished thinking. Many students seem intuitively to recognize that outlining is a cart-before-the-horse approach. As a result, they often write their outlines after the paper is completed in order to meet the demands of the assignment.

The real measure of these other more open forms, as Graser points out, is their effectiveness in helping students think aloud or "see to think" by providing the raw data of ideas. These ideas, used alone or in combination with others, provide a topic, a position on the topic (beginning of thesis/main idea), and the supporting detail for it.

Questioning

The ideas are gathered; the subject is taking shape. Now the writer needs to ask questions of her subject, explore it further, flesh it out. From the

FIGURE 2

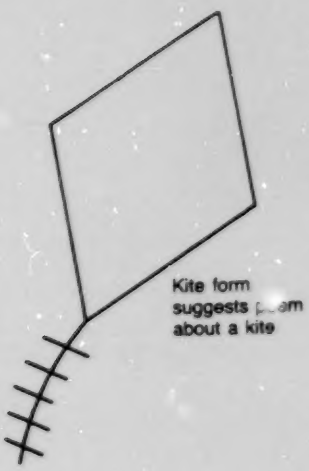


FIGURE 3

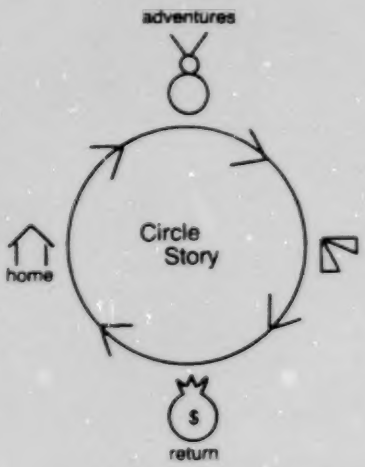
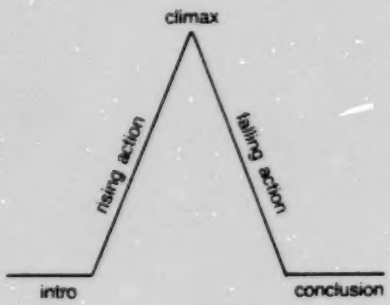


FIGURE 4



sketch, a drawing; from the drawing, a picture. Exploration might be conducted in the entire class or in small groups.

Murray suggests some initial intuitive, non-intellectual questions addressed to the whole class:

- How do I find my subject?
- How do I test it?
- What do I do when it changes?
- What questions in the reader's mind must I answer?
- What form is appropriate?

More structured question-centered techniques may then be used in peer response groups. (First mentioned and briefly described in the Diagnosis section of this guide, these groups require careful planning. Without direction, they quickly disintegrate into gossip sessions. They have a fixed membership, are relatively small [3-5 members], and must be ready to work, with guidance, at all stages of the process. In the beginning, they need regular monitoring, but are well worth the energy a teacher puts into their creation.)

1. Particle wave field (Maimon, 1981) A good thinking and research tool, this method helps a writer see a topic, the family, for example, in new ways and generate more questions about it.

- As an individual, self-contained unit: What about my family—what are they like? How do others see them? How do I fit in my family unit? What is my role?
- As it relates to other things around it; What is my family's impact on me? How is it the same as and different from my friends' families?
- As it appears over a period of time: How have my parents' attitudes toward me changed over time? Are these changes the result of their aging or mine? Why does the rivalry between me and my siblings seem to come and go?
- As a part of a larger system: How has my own experience been shaped by attitudes toward school, church, my relationships? How important is the family to society? Why is divorce such a big deal?

2. Five W's (Who? What? When? Where? Why?) These questions, commonly used by journalists, help writers record and organize facts about an event. They also provide the basic data for the "lead" or main idea of a piece. Students find these questions very manageable. And, there are models aplenty (you may want to have stacks of newspapers ready for class use).

3. Dramatistic pentad This is a rather fancy name for a way of looking at a topic as dramatic action. This technique helps the writer get to know the topic better by looking at its parts. It provides ample opportunity for exploring a topic in depth.

In using the pentad, students can no longer write just about the family. They have to think of an *action* involving it, then of the *actors* or agents (the people performing the action). Next, they look at the *scene* (the setting in which the action takes place), the *agency* or means (the methods the actors have used to achieve their purposes), and finally at the *purpose* itself (the point of all this activity).

If students want to write, for example, about family disagreements, they need to think about one particular disagreement (the action) and the people involved in it (the agents). The initial consideration of action poses new questions to help them generate more ideas. The images of the actors may lead them to think about characterization and its role in the action. What kind of people are involved in these disagreements? What kind of people are they when they disagree? What tactics do they employ? New questions now arise about the specific details of the event.

Questions about scene lead students to focus on time and place of the action. Answers to these questions may generate further speculation about times when this same disagreement took place in the past, prompting even further thinking about some patterns to the arguments which seem to be evolving.

Questions about the means or agency may lead writers to think about how these disagreements arise.

Finally, in contemplating purpose, students may explore how such disagreements might be avoided in the future.

The pentad, as a prewriting technique, provides a structure in which the writer can pursue an idea to a logical end. It helps a person to organize thinking and then discover what still needs to be known. In addition, the writer is considering and developing significant elements he needs in the actual drafting process: a purpose, an organization, a focus. (Burke, in Maimon p.29, 1981)

4. Cubing This is a way to examine a topic from different angles. Using this technique, the writer "turns a topic around and over" as if it were a cube, viewing it from varied perspectives to understand it better. The writer begins by describing the topic (the family), writing for about 3-5 minutes about its structure, size, physical appearance. The writer then repeats that process about five more times until the topic has been scrutinized from six different perspectives. In considering the topic, writers

- Describe it. (What's its color, size, shape, structure?)

- Compare it. (How is a family like yet different from a friend?)
- Associate it. (What does my family make me think of?)
- Analyze it. (What are its members like?)
- Apply it. (What can you do with it? How do I use my family?)
- Argue for or against it. (Cowan, 1980)

Problem Solving

The problem-solving model, a practical tool widely used in business, combines many of the elements students must consider when they begin to draft: situation (the assignment and the audience); the writer's goals for the reader (purpose), the writer himself, for the meaning, and for the text to be written. This technique spells out questions that must be solved in business and in writing:

- What are we trying to answer about the problem?
- Why does this question need to be answered?
- What purposes or goals will be reached by any action taken?
- What good will an action do?
- What goals are immediate and which long range?
- What results can be expected from our action?
- What's the best action to take?

To apply this problem-solving technique, first turn the topic or situation into a problem: How can I persuade my parents to let me have my own car (when the mere mention of the issue always causes an argument)? Then, go on, applying the general questions to the specific problem as stated. Why do I think I need a car? How can I go about getting one? How much help will I need? How will having my own car affect the family, particularly my siblings? And so on . . .

This strategy forces the writer to "worry" his idea and emphasizes the point made earlier about a value of prewriting: "when the writer has seen something significant and is able to understand its significance, he has found a subject." (Murray, 1968) He has, by exploring his own experience, not simply discovered meaning—he has used the discovery process to *make* meaning.

Free Writing and Journal Keeping

Free writing is writing which starts with no definite purpose and continues until a purpose and position make themselves known to the writer. ("Write for 4 minutes without stopping. If you can't think of anything to say, write that until an idea dawns and you can continue writing with more direction.") Completely unfocused free writing (which emerges from this assignment), shared with a reader, may unexpectedly point out to the writer potential topics for further exploration. More focused free writing produces, according to one researcher, some very good material. ("Write about X for 5 minutes; then, sum up the main point in an assertive statement—'I was really happy today. Everything went right.' ")

Journal writing provides the writer an opportunity "to talk with himself outside himself." (Graser, 1983) The writer uses the journal to record personal experiences and observations. Teacher-imposed guidelines are necessary (how much, how often, privacy rights, occasional topic suggestions, value) to give inexperienced writers the sort of motivation and structure—loose as it may appear—which lends direction and security to their writing efforts.

In addition to promoting the discovery and exploration of ideas, these techniques offer other similar benefits. They

- Encourage fluency and facility by writing from abundance.
- Reduce the fear of criticism and the inhibitions produced by grades. Teachers don't mark this writing; they give credit for number of pages and consistency of effort. That's important, for "If instructors continue to emphasize avoidance of error, students will finally learn to avoid as many errors as possible by not writing at all." (Maimon, 1979)
- Can be used with all grades and on all ability levels.
- Reduce the paper load for teachers even as they provide additional writing experiences for students.
- Are enjoyable in that they encourage self-expression and honest writing.

A final note on these exercises: teachers should participate in them along with their students. Our involvement lends credibility to the assignment and helps students to dispel the myth that a non-writer can be a good teacher of writing.

Making Writing Work for the Reader

If writers are to communicate effectively, they must become aware of certain elements common to all effective writing. Most of these have to some extent emerged already in the prewriting processes described, yet they must be given explicit atten-

tion—they must be taught—if writers are to understand and control them.

- Purpose (Why am I writing this? What do I want to say?)
- Audience (Who is my reader? What must I know about him so that I can help him understand?)
- Focus (What is my main idea?)
- Organization (How shall I put my ideas together? In what order?)
- Form (Shall I write a story? An essay? A poem?)

The following techniques have proven effective in helping writers actively consider their readers and, in doing so, give attention to the other important elements.

1. Allot class time for writers to test their audiences. They should not only name a specific audience, but also consider how much that audience already knows and believes about the subject. This helps avoid repeating obvious information. Considering the selected audience's experience and maturity will also affect decisions about point of view, phrasing, and word choice. (The writer who, for example, selects her parents as her audience for her paper on the family can make some very precise and intelligent decisions about what she'll include and how she will present her information.)

2. Have students experiment with language by having them write on one topic for a variety of different audiences. They learn early how to talk to different people; they need to learn to write for those people, too.

3. Point out the need for writing to "show, not tell." Putting general, unfocused statements from a student's writing on the board (My friend is very nice.) and asking various individuals in the class to define "nice" will elicit specific details (She listens to me when I'm sad.). Students quickly perceive the need for these specific details: If they want readers to share their own perceptions, then they must *show* the readers what they see.

4. Encourage students to share their writing in large and small groups. The "instant replay" helps writers see what their readers need and expect from writing.

5. Use professional models to help students focus on proven techniques for involving the reader. Popular magazines are an excellent source of models and are readily available.

6. Use the cloze method, in which single words or phrases are deleted from an original piece and the resulting blanks are filled in by the reader, who responds to hints or suggestions in context. Using this same technique with the beginning writer's own work allows her to see how she mislead or failed to lead her own reader.

Prewriting prepares students for successful writing. It gives them time to think, provides a structure for organizing thoughts, and allows them to recognize what they already know and what they need to find out before the first draft. The key to the success of this stage of the writing process is the time and encouragement given to it.

DRAFTING

> **I hear . . . and I forget.**
>
> **I see . . . and I remember.**
>
> **I do . . . and I understand.**
>
> **—Chinese proverb.**

The preparation is done—selecting a subject and an audience, gathering data, choosing a form and a structure. It's time to commit to paper. For most of us, drafting is the hard part.

In this first tentative stage of putting words on paper, the writer is still thinking, still exploring. No sooner does one thought go down than a new one emerges. That can be overwhelming, but the idea is not to be overwhelmed. The idea is to recognize that drafting is a stage; it is not final; it is part of the evolution of the product. The writer continues building thoughts, seeking order as he goes. Critical judgment must be suspended at this point so that the ideas can flow and take on definition. Writers can go back later and make changes—but they must start somewhere.

As a writer yourself, you can take comfort in knowing, from personal experience, just how tentative the drafting process can be—no matter how well you've prepared. As a teacher of writing, you need to lead students to recognize the same thing. Writing with them provides excellent modeling: they can take comfort from your struggles. You can remind them that few people, regardless of the nature of their task, nor how adept they are at it, get it "right" the first time around. Ernest Hemingway is said to have rewritten the last page of one of his novels over seventy times. Student writers need to practice until the elements of the process are an integral part of them. The learning comes from the doing.

The importance of the writing teacher in the drafting process as it is practiced in the classroom can't be emphasized enough. The teacher is part cheerleader, part hand holder, another part guide. Teachers must understand the student as writer, the writing as process, themselves as instructor. Because theirs is such an important role, these elements and their impact on instruction need to be more clearly defined for teachers.

Understanding the Process

Writing is not static—writers make decisions, learn as they go. Ellen Goodman, columnist for the Boston *Globe*, observed, "I think through my fingers. Often I don't know what I think about something until I've written it." Meaning develops as one writes.

Studies of student writing behaviors have identified four distinct "moments of writing."

1. Starting
2. Writing
3. Reformulating
4. Stopping.

The writing teacher needs to understand the characteristics of these moments and how they present themselves in students.

The teacher needs to know, for example, that students begin to notice their errors when they move into the reformulating stage. For some, reformulating may mean complete rewriting. For younger or unskilled writers, it means correcting superficial errors, like spelling. Many of these writers also equate reformulating with doing a copy of the paper in ink. For more experienced writers, reformulating or revising involves making choices among familiar options. Some writers might consider different ways to organize the information or conclude the piece. Others simply stop writing when they've put down all the information they want to convey. No matter what their habits, most students feel comfortable reworking their writing when the writing environment encourages experimentation in a rough draft followed by careful assessment and reconsideration. (MITV Instructional Guide, Teaching Writing: A Process Approach, 1983)

Understanding the range and variety of these writing behaviors tells the writing teacher when intervention in the process is necessary. When it becomes apparent that a particular individual is "stuck," that she may need reinforcement of certain skills or require additional preparation, the teacher has several options. In a quick conference, the teacher can cheer on the writer who needs to know she's on the right path, ask questions to prompt thinking, suggest returning to prewriting activities—making lists, gathering new details—to get back on familiar ground.

The rule to guide teacher intervention is a simple one: take care, because if we do too much, we're interfering. We need to avoid many rules. And we need to withhold comments on usage, spelling or mechanics in the drafting stage; editing intrudes on the principal functions of composing—construction and discovery.

Understanding the Writer

Writers requiring assistance with their writing at one point may not need it at another. Thus, teachers also need to understand the particular problems and processes of the students they teach.

One such problem—writer's block, the terror of the blank page—is very real. All writers, skilled and unskilled, face it at some point. The writing teacher who writes with students can often speak convincingly of the problem, from experience. The teacher can also develop strategies for managing the fears and overcoming them. Sometimes little more than encouragement is needed. Reinforcing the plunge-in-this-is-not-final philosophy may work. Sometimes more task-oriented intervention is necessary: "Try this idea; let's analyze this lead as a possible model for your own."

The writing teacher also needs to recognize and accept the very individualized rituals of writing. Describing one's own rituals, having students describe theirs, and recognizing that rituals are universal help create a positive attitude. Some writers need to talk out their ideas as they write. Others like to move around. Many people like to eat (good to acknowledge, even if practice is out of the question). Some are quite messy (though the term often describes appearance rather than content). Accepting, even encouraging, these variations as they are part of the individualized processes of composing and as they can be reasonably managed in the classroom is important.

In addition to putting students at ease with their rituals, the writing teacher must help students understand their own writing goals. Writers must be encouraged to suspend critical judgement as they draft, yet they must also be helped to develop a "critical eye." As they write, rethink, and write again, they must continually address these critical questions:

- What have I said?
- Does it make sense?
- What else do I need to know?
- Does my form fit my new content?

With practice, the student writers will eventually be able to answer these questions for themselves. In the beginning, they may need some help. Peer response groups can be an excellent source for that help. They can provide feedback as the draft develops, letting the writers know whether they're "making sense," whether they're paying attention to the expectations and needs of their readers.

Integrating Instructional Requirements

Not only are writing teachers responsible for guiding the writer through the drafting stage in a positive environment, they must also provide instructional leadership.

The teacher must have clear goals for the entire program as well as clearly defined objectives for individual assignments. Students must be taught how to do what they are assigned so that they can practice skills as they write. Asked to write an essay, for example, they must first understand how an essay is built. Too often the frustrations which paralyze student writers or make them frightened and resentful of writing can be traced to their own ignorance about the particular kind of writing they are asked to produce.

To emphasize the importance of the drafting stage, we must plan adequate class time for it. To encourage habits of production, we require that drafts be done on time. Other guidelines help us and our students: Technical considerations are suspended until the final draft; early drafts are experimental; since people learn to write by writing, we encourage students to write regularly. And, when we assess, reconsider, and make helpful suggestions throughout the drafting stage, we are practicing what we preach and promoting confidence in our writers.

Writing has its own rewards. As writers, we've already discovered that. As teachers of writing, we have the responsibility for helping students discover the same thing.

The next section—revision—focuses on specific techniques the writing teacher can use to help students move from first draft through subsequent drafts on their way to a polished product.

REVISING

A weather forecaster confidently predicts two inches of snow; five hours later, he revises his forecast, predicting six to ten inches. Each forecast has validity for us at the time it is given: we accept the report until new data and new interpretations of patterns enable a forecaster to refine and perhaps change the original estimates. The closer the storm comes, the more accuracy we want. Yet only when the snow has fallen do we expect complete accuracy: how many inches of snow have we gotten?

A writer who revises or "reformulates" a draft is doing what the forecaster does: changing the report as ideas and interpretations become more clear. No matter how well the writer thought through audience, purpose, focus, he is bound to discover things about what he's writing as he's writing and as he looks over his draft.

In real writing, a person revises throughout the process, glancing back, crossing out, adding sentences, moving paragraphs, starting over. But for convenience and clarity of discussion we single out revision as a stage in the process. Similarly, in a classroom we specify a time and certain activities for revision, generally at the point when writers have worked through a rough draft. The draft, though it is tentative, can yield information about how the writer is progressing toward two goals, both of which are basic to all social writing:

- To say what the writer means to say
- To convey the meaning to a reader.

Because these goals have to do with meaning, revision must direct itself primarily to meaning, not to the absence of error. This is especially important for students, particularly young or unskilled writers, whose tendency is to "look through language" to see the meaning they have intended and therefore to focus any editing they do on surface details. (Graser, 1983)

Focusing on meaning can also be helpful to teachers. Some of us tend to "collapse" several processes (instruction, proofreading, evaluating) into the category of marking papers. Well directed student revision increases the opportunity for instruction and learning, improving the products we see.

Settings and Techniques for Revision Work

Individual On their own, student writers, unless they're rather sophisticated, don't do much with revision as a stage. If they had been able to spot weaknesses, the weaknesses wouldn't appear in their drafts. If they had thought about alternative approaches to developing the subject, they would have used them. They may benefit from a simple checklist designed to guide their re-reading of what they've written; they will also benefit from more direct structured responses to their drafts.

Large group

1. Provide copies to all students or, better, use an overhead projector to look at examples of professional writers' work: before and after excerpts; pages with circles and arrows and other indicators of structural change; scratched-out sentences and sentences written in. Let students see that revising is real. (Do this with your own drafts: students love to see that you work as they do in writing!)

2.a. Take the class through a revising activity. Using the overhead projector, look at a promising piece of writing, evaluating focus, structure, development.

2.b. If you plan to employ a checklist, have the class use it on the sample you're discussing.

3. Let the class see how a peer response group can approach revising. Participate in a simulated small-group revising activity. Review the ground rules of good peer group work and emphasize in every way you can that reactions to writing must begin with and stress positive comments.

4. Give a writing sample to each of your peer groups, let them revise it, and have a representative from each group show the revision and report on how they developed it. Since each group will come up with something different, this activity reinforces the notion that there is never a "right" way of doing things in writing.

5. If, as you move from student to student, group to group, you find common needs, you can convene the large group and teach to those needs before the students write final drafts. Obviously, this helps the writer, but it also helps to reduce your need to edit during evaluation.

Using Peer Response Groups

In this setting, a writer has the benefit of a real audience. Peer readers provide immediate response to the draft and an opportunity to talk through problems. Everyone has the chance to see other people's approaches to the same assignment. (In revision activities, it is helpful if all members of the group have copies of each others' drafts.)

Incorporating Teacher Conferences

As peer groups work, teachers can have 2-3 minute conferences with students, reading their drafts, providing praise and encouragement, suggesting one area which revision might address ("Are there other reasons for supporting this candidate?" "What's another way of ordering your ideas?" "Which of these two ideas are you really talking about?").

There is a tendency, revealed in research, for teachers to impose their own ideas about content and structure. Remember that the writer wants help in expressing his meaning, not ours.

Choosing Among the Revising Tools

Within these settings, many tools and approaches can be used in revising. Three of these are discussed below.

1. Listening/Reading The writer reads his draft aloud; someone else reads a writer's draft aloud; group members silently read drafts; members read along as someone reads aloud. Hearing as well as seeing works-in-progress helps readers and writers alike to note weak spots which reformulating can address.

2. Cutting/Pasting The teacher provides to each student or group a copy of an un-revised but promising draft. Students separate the parts of the piece and reassemble it as they think appropriate. Manipulating a piece physically helps writers think about restructuring their own drafts.

3. Revision Guides: Checklists and Question Sheets Keyed to the objectives of a writing assignment and available throughout the composition process, checklists help the writer in on-going evaluation and revision. When it's time to revise drafts, another type of checklist, which uses questions modeled after the natural give and take of conversation can be useful in telling writers how the drafts work. Questions like "What do you think is the main idea?" "What part would you like to know more about?" and "What is the most effective part of the paper?" guide the conversation. Rating scales (excellent/good/weak; high/med/low; number value) can easily be adapted to checklists.

Proofreading the Product

Only when writers have revised for meaning should they consider mechanics, the surface features of their writing. Graser draws an excellent analogy between a writer proofreading for mechanics and a woodworker sanding his completed project:

> It is as logical to have proofreading come at the end of the writing process

> as it is to have sanding and varnishing come at the end of cabinet-making. Woodworkers construct first and finish the surfaces later. Their time is too valuable to use in sanding and varnishing uncut lumber.
>
> (Graser, 1983)

When the time comes for sanding and varnishing, they must be done well, though anyone who has tried his hand at woodworking knows that they aren't done easily.

Nor is editing. We weren't born with the ability to spell, to place commas correctly, or to know a dangling modifier when we see one. We learned these skills, and so must our students.

Instruction in mechanics works best when it comes in the context of the writing process. Here are some ideas for helping writers with their proofreading.

1. Remind ourselves that the less skilled or experienced the writer, the less she can see what's wrong with her own writing. She assumes she has said what she means. It's clear to her. It's the reader who can't understand. Multiple readers and a set of simply phrased questions posed consistently to the writing help alleviate this problem over time.
2. Try to understand the causes of errors: the sounds of spoken language; differences in dialect patterns; confusion of rules; common but substandard practices.
3. Recognize that there is not always consensus—even among professionals who write and teach writing—about what is "correct." If the local school staff can be consistent and limit the mechanical concerns they wish to highlight, their students benefit.
4. Work with students to identify and concentrate on classes of errors rather than single, separate errors. It would help many of us to know that we've made only one mistake four times rather than four different errors.

The operation of proofreading can be the same as that used in revising: individual, large group, peer response group, and conference settings with the tools we've employed throughout the writing process.

When the student writer has completed her revising, she is ready to submit a finished product. We as teachers are not quite finished, though. We move next into evaluation.

EVALUATING

Anyone who has ever taught English has watched students get back graded compositions, look at the grade, and throw the papers into the wastebasket—this after the teacher has just spent hours in grading.

Obviously, we'd all like to avoid the scenario. But how?

Reviewing the Past

There's a need to backtrack—provide an historical overview—in order to answer the question. Traditionally, assigning writing was equated with teaching writing. The teacher would direct students to "Write a narrative about X." The ability to do so was assumed to be innate, perhaps stored somewhere in the genes. Students needed only to draw on this natural reservoir for the content of the paper. We would show them where to put the commas.

So students, having little if any real knowledge about how to write (probably assuming it was something like talking on paper), went home (or on to the next class), wrote down whatever came to mind about X (or copied it from the encyclopedia), recopied it in ink and turned it in. We then spent our weekends marking the errors in these papers, tearing our hair and despairing over "kids who don't follow directions."

All that's pretty understandable given several facts:

- Teachers themselves had little if any formal training in how to teach writing.
- Instruction in literature and grammar took precedence in the English program. Most writing came in response to lessons taught in those areas.
- Teaching loads precluded assigning many compositions.

Given that background, it is little wonder students only glanced at the grade on the top of the paper before heaving it into the trash. The sole motivation to write was the grade.

With the renewed emphasis on writing in schools today, with all the research on the teaching of writing as process, and with all the classroom-tested techniques and tools available, the scenario can be different.

This guide has demonstrated how the scenario can be different. Indeed, the whole approach to

writing is different. Each of the preceding sections stressed the importance of a particular stage in light of the whole writing process. This section—evaluation—also provides some new insights on an old practice. We used to think of grading as a job, related to but not part of writing. Now we view it as one step in the process—an assessment of a product in light of its production.

Reasons for Evaluating

Evaluation has two principal purposes. It is a learning tool and therefore quite personal subjective and immediate; students evaluate themselves, consciously or unconsciously, as they attempt to master the skills of writing.

It is also a teaching tool which we use to help students in their self-evaluations and ourselves in monitoring their progress. In turn, the writing of our students and our evaluation of it may be evaluated by others: parents who care about their children's progress; and administrators who are responsible for both the instructional program and the success of students in it.

Research shows us that we need to have a purpose for evaluation before we choose a method. But writing competency is a long-term goal. What are the more immediate objectives which will help up to decide what tools and methods of evaluation to use?

For ourselves, there are two primary objectives:

- To measure an individual student's understanding, progress, and skill
- To judge the effectiveness and determine the direction of our program. Completing the circle of the writing process, evaluation moves into diagnosis: what we observe in evaluating the work on a composition and the composition itself we will use in preparing our approach to the next composition.

Methods of Evaluating

In meeting these objectives, we can make use of several tools and methods, six of which are particularly appropriate for evaluating the process of writing.

1. Writing samples taken at the beginning and end of a school year can be compared on the basis of given criteria.

2. Composition folders in which student writing is filed can provide not only sources for on-going progress evaluation by student and teacher, but also pieces for revision in light of new skills.

3. Checklist/grade criteria sheets/specification sheets can be used during the writing process by both students and teachers to be sure that the goals for an assignment are being reached. The same sheets can become grading sheets as the teacher evaluates the product.

4. Informal oral comments are a very effective means of evaluation and encouragement.

5. Participation grades for group work as well as individual writing in workshop periods tell students that a teacher values each stage in the writing process.

6. Highlighting one area for evaluation on a composition (using concrete images or including analogies) and calling for its inclusion in subsequent writings can encourage sequential development of skills.

In reality, writing must stand on its own merits, and so we must also employ techniques of evaluation which address the product.

1. Short conferences (2-3 minutes) in which a teacher discusses a piece of writing with its author are highly desirable. They reduce the time a teacher spends alone with papers; permit the student to ask questions and respond to comments; allow teacher and student to identify causes of problems and strategies for improvement. Immediate and personal, the conference involves the student as no other method can.

2. Comments on a paper can be clear and useful if they begin with a reaction to what is said, not how it's said, are conversational in tone, and discuss the paper as a whole.

3. Rating scales and checklists, particularly when they are in a student's hands from the outset of a writing assignment, help to focus the writer's concerns and objectify the evaluator's perception of a paper.

4. Primary trait or feature analysis scoring isolates and emphasizes one characteristic desired in a composition (use of details to support generalizations; chronological ordering of events) and is effective because it simplifies the evaluator's job and focuses his efforts.

Conferences and comments as described here are examples of holistic evaluation, which views a piece of writing as a unit and does not separate aspects of the whole. Regardless of the specific techniques it employs, holistic evaluation appears to be an extremely effective assessment approach.

Focusing on the Product

There are plenty of elements to evaluate in a piece of writing: word choice, syntax, mechanics, organization, unity, coherence, style, length, appearance. In addition, we all have our own opinions about what "good" writing is. So, to be sure that our evaluation is appropriate, we need to work together in departments and school systems to

identify what we want to evaluate in student writing. Departmental, system, and state objectives help. In addition, suggests Graser, we can consult published guides for scoring, which "spell out the qualities of good writing" and whose "explanation of the strengths and weaknesses in the sample student papers often clarifies what makes writing good." (Graser, 1983)

Attending to mechanics is, as we know, an editing function, yet many English teachers find themselves editing rather than evaluating their student's work. It's easy to see why we over-mark: we like to be thorough; we want to show knowledge of our material; many parents as well as students and teachers feel that if a paper isn't covered with red it hasn't been graded; it's easier to see and react to mechanical errors than to find problems in structure and logic; it's a habit.

Another motivation—and probably the strongest one—is our conviction that a piece of writing which is full of mechanical errors is a piece which doesn't communicate. We are responsible for giving our students basic communication skills and knowing the difference between here and hear, a sentence and a fragment is basic.

However, we can't do everything at once, nor can a student, especially an inexperienced or unskilled writer, get much practical help from proofreading symbols on the page. We can, as we evaluate make notes to ourselves about points to address in future instruction, but for the evaluation itself, we do best if we

- Assess a limited number of points
- Assign to mechanics a fixed—and reasonable—percentage of the total grade.

Three common-sense guidelines on evaluation in closing.

1. Evaluation is easier and most effective when it is focused on one area.

2. It is important for students to understand, preferably before they undertake the assignment, the criteria and methods of evaluation. Time spent in explaining and discussing is far more productive for everyone than time spent in arguing about grades.

3. Writing is very personal, and students are very vulnerable. Therefore, students must know that their progress and their work, but not their character, will be up for scrutiny.

CHAPTER 2

CONTENT DOMAINS FOR MARYLAND FUNCTIONAL WRITING TEST

INTRODUCTION

The state has adopted two goals for instruction in writing. These goals ask students:

I. To use the writing process to communicate personal information

II. To use the writing process to respond to the demands and obligations of society.

Within each of these goals, students need to develop key objectives which contribute to five competencies:

1.1.1 Recording information for self and others

1.2.1 Writing messages and reports

1.2.2 Writing letters

1.2.3 Completing forms

1.2.4 Writing sentences and coherent paragraphs

In addition to these two goals and five competencies, thirty-nine objectives were adopted. Each of the thirty-nine objectives is assigned a code number consisting of four digits, in which the first digit indicates the instructional guide volume, the second digit indicates the state goal, the third digit the competency, and the fourth is the objective number.

Level I

For the purpose of diagnostic feedback on the Maryland Functional Writing Test (MFWT) Level I, the objectives were grouped into five domains, each containing several similar objectives. The domains follow:

1. Key Elements of Narrative Writing
2. Key Elements of Explanatory Writing
3. Key Elements of Organization
4. Sentence Formation
5. Conventions of Writing

Level II

Since different types of writing demand different writing skills, the MFWT-Level II has two domains, Narrative and Explanatory. The following objectives have been placed in one or both domains:

Narrative Writing

1.2.4.16 Write a paragraph that is developed through narration

1.2.4.19 Write a paragraph that describes a person, place, or object

1.2.2.1 Write a friendly letter

1.2.2.14 Write a letter of response to a letter received

1.2.4.18 Write a paragraph in response to a question

1.2.4.1 Write a sentence that makes a statement

1.2.4.7 Write two or more related sentences on a single topic or idea

Explanatory Writing

1.2.1.3 Write directions to a specified location

1.2.1.7 Write an accident report

1.2.2.1 Write a friendly letter

1.2.2.3 Write an answer to an invitation

1.2.2.4 Write a thank-you note

1.2.2.6 Write an invitation

1.2.2.10 Write a letter of application for a job

1.2.2.11 Write a letter of complaint to a company

1.2.2.13 Write a letter of request in business letter form

1.2.2.14 Write a letter of response to a letter received

1.2.4.17 Write a paragraph that explains a process

1.2.4.19 Write a paragraph that describes a person, place or object

1.2.4.20 Write a paragraph to summarize ideas read or heard

1.2.4.18 Write a paragraph in response to a question

1.2.4.1 Write a sentence that makes a statement

1.2.4.7 Write two or more related sentences on a single topic or idea

Both types of writing will be assessed each year, as the two forms make differing demands on a writer. It is quite possible that students will possess varying degrees of competence with the two modes of discourse.

Each domain will be assessed with one writing task that asks the student to compose a letter or a paragraph in response to a particular writing assignment.

Not all of the writing objectives from the Declared Competencies Index have been included in the two domains. One group of objectives fits together as a Supplying Information category. This category consists of the following objectives:

1.1.1.19 Write own full address including zip code

1.1.1.20 Write own telephone number including area code

1.1.1.22 Record full names of own parents or guardians, brothers, and sisters

1.1.1.25 Write names and telephone numbers of persons to contact in case of emergency

1.2.3.1 Complete financial forms

1.2.3.2 Complete license forms

1.2.3.3 Complete order forms

1.2.3.4 Complete application forms

1.2.3.7 Complete personal information cards

1.2.1.9 Write bills and receipts for services

Since there is a domain (Understanding Forms) on the Maryland Functional Reading Test that measures the skill of form completion, these objectives will not be measured again on the MFWT.

Another group of objectives remains unmeasured by any of the domains.

These objectives are:

1.1.1.1 Complete specific information from a schedule

1.2.1.3 Write lists

1.1.1.4 Take notes from spoken or written materials

1.2.1.1 Record oral messages that include time entries

1.2.1.5 Write signs of warning

1.2.1.6 Write minutes of a meeting

1.2.1.8 Write own resume including educational and work experience

These objectives are not amenable to a paper-and-pencil test though they are desired competencies for all students. Thus, this group of objectives will be assessed most effectively in the classroom.

These domains were developed by a statewide group of instructional personnel according to the similarity of instructional method and content of the behaviors contained within them. Furthermore, each domain outlines the instructional content which is eligible to assess and provides definition to the content to be measured on the Maryland Functional Writing Test. These criteria will be periodically reviewed to insure that they continue to provide a congruence between measurement and instruction.

Seventh grade pupils will be given Level I MFWT. The printouts from this selected response test will provide diagnostic information for each student at each domain level. Teachers may utilize this information to plan an appropriate program to assist each student in attaining competence in the basic functional writing skills. Ninth grade pupils will be given Level II MFWT. Test results can be used to plan an appropriate assistance program for those students who need assistance.

Just as important as the functional tests is the ongoing diagnosis through student writing samples, writing conferences, teacher observations, and informal tests. It is crucial that teachers use diagnostic teaching to examine student work and supplement these examinations with interviews of students having difficulty. During these interviews it is a good idea to simply collect information rather than to instruct the student. Without the fear of criticism, students will be encouraged to be more open with the instructor and provide examples of their writing.

The following two sections focus on the instructional content domains of the MFWT. Each content domain is divided into four parts: (1) a general description of the domain; (2) a description of the test questions, (3) a description of the possible answer choices, and (4) sample items.

The first three sections describe the instructional criteria for these domains. This includes a general description of the type of questions to be found within each domain as well as specific restraints on and qualifications to questions for both the Level II test (to be given first in ninth grade) and the Level I (to be given in seventh grade). In the fourth section, sample items in test format are presented.

While it is important for both teachers and students to be aware of the specific types of questions to be asked on the MFWT and to diagnose those areas in which the student may be weak, it is also crucial not to limit all problems to these specific restrictions for several reasons. First, the teacher may eliminate a large number of fine writing activities which do not meet the specific qualifications and secondly, the larger the base of experiences the students are presented and the more types of writing the students are asked to do, the more proficient they will become.

This guide is a result of the suggestions offered by Maryland teachers and serves as an instructional reference for educators on teaching functional writing.

It should be stressed that this book is not intended as a textbook, but a guide from which the teacher may glean ideas. Remember, the teacher is best able to specify the type of activity or teaching method which is most appropriate for his/her own students.

Organizing for Instruction

There are a variety of ways one may make use of the instructional domain criteria, both before and after giving the Maryland Functional Writing Test. It is a good idea to promptly begin formulating banks of items based on these criteria. The banks may be set up by individual teachers, entire departments (several department meetings may be spent writing items), or whole systems. They can be written on 3 × 5 cards and stored in a central location. Once established, teachers can make use of items from the banks in a number of ways. Prior to administering the MFWT, teachers may wish to give a "pretest" using items from the banks. Areas of weakness may be diagnosed, and additional practice for these areas may be provided by other bank items. Following the test, teachers may wish to use exercises in the banks as a basis for remediation, or perhaps additional items may be put together to formulate a "posttest" to check on the effectiveness of the teacher's remedial strategy.

Diagnosis (pre or post) may be either on the domain level or on the objective level. When making this decision, it is important to note that it is the responsibility of the Maryland State Department of Education to measure achievement on the domain level through the functional testing program. Additional specificity may be gained through the selection of a series of items on each objective, thus allowing the teacher to formulate a diagnosis on the objective level. In either case, using items in the banks will facilitate the construction of appropriate diagnostic instruments.

Items may be continually added to the banks to increase their usefulness. Teachers or schools may wish to exchange items in order to enlarge their own supply. Whatever method is used to formulate or utilize the banks, they can continue to be valuable educational resources for many years to come. Parents can utilize the domain descriptions and other information contained in this guide for reinforcing these skills in the home setting.

To further assist the classroom teacher, the School Library Media Services Branch and the Office of Project Basic published suggested resources to support the instructional guide. This publication, "Instructional Resources of Writing," contains an annotated bibliography of student-use materials such as library books, films, filmstrips, kits, records, games, audio and video-tapes, filmloops, and transparencies.

LEVEL I
DOMAIN I
KEY ELEMENTS OF NARRATIVE WRITING

General Description

The student will be presented with all or part of a written narrative communication from which a single sentence has been deleted. Then the student will select from among four choices the one sentence which best fills the blank. This sentence will add detail or maintain the proper sequence of events in language which is appropriate for the communication's intended audience and in keeping with the tone established in the communication.

Description of Test Questions

1. A test question will be preceded by a boxed, written narrative or descriptive communication from which a single sentence has been deleted. Each communication will be one of the following forms from the Declared Competencies Index

   1.2.2.1 A friendly letter

   1.2.2.3 An answer to an invitation

   1.2.2.14 A letter of response to a letter received

   1.2.4.16 A paragraph that is developed through narration

   1.2.4.18 A paragraph written in response to a question

   1.2.4.19 A paragraph that describes a person, place or object

2. Each boxed communication will be introduced with a brief parenthesized assignment sentence which describes the purpose, topic, audience, and form of the communication.

3. The boxed communications will reflect the types of writing likely to be composed by seventh grade students.

4. Excluding the parenthesized assignment sentence, no more than five sentences (including the blank sentence) will be used in the communication. Sentences will contain no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List.

5. A topic will be developed in one of two ways:

   - through narration of a sequence of events
   - through elaboration.

6. In each communication, one sentence will be deleted and represented by a blank line in the display. Any sentence other than the first (focusing) sentence may be deleted.

Description of Answer Choices

1. A set of four answer choices will follow each test question. Each answer choice will be a complete, grammatically correct sentence and contain no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List.

2. For a question based on proper sequence the correct answer choice will be the sentence that (a) most logically completes the sequence of events and (b) is in appropriate language for the communication.

3. For a question based on adding detail the correct answer choice will be the sentence that (a) either adds relevant new detail or elaborates on existing detail in the communication and (b) uses appropriate language for the communication.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the selections in the boxes. Each one has a blank where a sentence is missing. Read the question after each selection which relates to the passage. Then choose the sentence for the blank that best answers the question. Mark the letter of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

1. A student wrote this paragraph as part of a letter to a friend telling about a trip he took.

We arrived in Towson just before dinner time Saturday night. We checked in at our hotel and then went out to dinner at an Italian restaurant. The next morning, we got up early and drove to Fort McHenry. We spent Sunday there, seeing the sights. _____

Which one of the following sentences can best be used to keep the paragraph IN PROPER SEQUENCE?

(A) We left our house for the trip to Towson on Saturday afternoon. (out of sequence)

(B) I think I like Italian food better than just about any other kind. (irrelevant)

(C) When we arrived home from our trip, we went immediately to bed. (correct)

(D) After dinner on Saturday, we explored the neighborhood near our hotel. (out of sequence)

2. A student wrote this paragraph as part of an assignment to describe a favorite person for classmates.

Kevin Jones has been my best friend for over six years. We met when he moved into the house next to ours. _____

We like to do many of the same things, and we often go places together. We see each other almost every day.

Which one of the following sentences can best be used to ADD DETAIL to the paragraph?

(A) He came over to my house and asked me to show him around the neighborhood. (correct)

(B) I have two sisters and a brother who is six years younger than I am. (irrelevant)

(C) This happened more than six years ago. (redundant)

(D) His behavior in introducing me to his parents was most civilized. (inappropriate language)

LEVEL I
DOMAIN II
KEY ELEMENTS OF EXPLANATORY WRITING

General Description

The student will be presented with all or part of a written explanatory communication from which a single sentence has been deleted. Then the student will select from among four choices the one sentence which best fills the blank. This sentence will complete or clarify the communication in language which is appropriate for the communication's intended audience and in keeping with the tone established in the communication.

Description of Test Questions

1. A test question will be preceded by a boxed, written explanatory communication in which a single sentence has been deleted or a single sentence underlined. Each communication will be one of the following forms from the Declared Competencies Index:

- 1.2.1.3 Directions to a specified location
- 1.2.1.7 An accident report
- 1.2.2.1 A friendly letter
- 1.2.2.3 An answer to an invitation
- 1.2.2.4 A thank-you note
- 1.2.2.6 An invitation
- 1.2.2.10 A letter of application for a job
- 1.2.2.11 A letter of complaint to a company
- 1.2.2.13 A letter of request in business letter form
- 1.2.2.14 A letter of response to a letter received
- 1.2.4.17 A paragraph that explains a process
- 1.2.4.18 A paragraph written in response to a question
- 1.2.4.19 A paragraph that describes a person, place or object
- 1.2.4.20 A paragraph that summarizes ideas read or heard

2. Each boxed communication will be introduced with a brief parenthesized assignment sentence which describes the purpose, topic, audience, and form of the communication.

3. The boxed communications will reflect the types of writing likely to be composed by seventh grade students.

4. Excluding the parenthesized assignment sentence, no more than five sentences (including the blank sentence) will be used in the communication. Sentences will contain no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List.

5. In each communication, one sentence will be deleted or underlined. A deleted sentence will be represented by a black line in the display. Any sentence other than the first (focusing) sentence may be deleted.

Description of Answer Choices

1. A set of four answer choices will follow each test question. Each answer choice will be a complete, grammatically correct sentence that contains no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List.

2. For a question based on completeness the correct answer choice will be the sentence that (a) most thoroughly supplies information needed in the communication and (b) is in appropriate language for the communication.

3. For a question based on clarity the correct answer choice will be the sentence that (a) best clarifies the communication through explaining or adding detail to other information in the communication and (b) uses appropriate language for the communication.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the selections in the boxes. Some of the selections have a blank where a sentence is missing. Other selections have a sentence that is underlined. Read the question after each selection which relates to the passage. Then choose the sentence that best answers the question. Mark the letter of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

1. Denise Green wrote this letter of application to the president of a company where she wishes to work.

112 Forbes Street
Annapolis, Maryland 20626
April 12, 1982

Mr. George Travis
President, Capitol Insurance
556 Arundel Plaza
Annapolis, Maryland 20626

Dear Sir:

I am very interested in working for your company in the summer work-study program. I have completed a typing class at school. _____

_____

_____

I would appreciate hearing from you about work-study openings at your company.

Sincerely,

Denise Greene

Which one of the following sentences can best be used to COMPLETE the letter?

(A) My friend Alice was in typing class with me. (irrelevant)

(B) I think it would be great to be in a work-study program at your company. (redundant)

(C) My teachers have told me that I am ready for a work-study program. (correct)

(D) Now I'm ready to try my luck at a big-time job. (inappropriate language)

2. Jody Green wrote this letter to Ford's Theater asking for information about the theater.

210 Cedar Street
Cecilton, Maryland 21920
January 4, 1983

Public Information Office
Ford's Theater
511 10th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Sir or Madam:

My class at school will be studying Abraham Lincoln's life next month. I have been asked to prepare a report on Ford's Theater for the class. Do you have any free materials that I might use? I would like some things. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Jody Green

Which one of the following ways of changing the underlined sentence is the best way to make the letter CLEARER?

(A) I would especially like to have a few color pictures of the theater. (correct)

(B) I could really dig having some flashy stuff like pictures for my report. (inappropriate language)

(C) I want my report to be interesting and have a lot of things with it. (less clear)

(D) I need all the help I can get finding things for the report. (less clear)

LEVEL I
DOMAIN III
KEY ELEMENTS OF ORGANIZATION

General Description

The student will be presented with all or part of a written explanatory or narrative communication from which a single sentence has been deleted. Then the student will select from among four choices the one sentence which best fills the blank. This sentence will maintain the communication's organizational and stylistic structure and provide one of the following organizational elements: beginning, middle, or end.

Description of Test Questions

1. A test question will be preceded by a boxed, written explanatory or narrative communication from which a single sentence has been deleted. Each communication will be one of the following forms from the Declared Competencies Index

1.2.1.3 Directions to a specified location

1.2.1.7 An accident report

1.2.2.1 A friendly letter

1.2.2.3 An answer to an invitation

1.2.2.4 A thank-you note

1.2.2.6 An invitation

1.2.2.10 A letter of application for a job

1.2.2.11 A letter of complaint to a company

1.2.2.13 A letter of request in business letter form

1.2.2.14 A letter of response to a letter received

1.2.4.16 A paragraph that is developed through narration

1.2.4.17 A paragraph that explains a process

1.2.4.18 A paragraph written in response to a question

1.2.4.19 A paragraph that describes a person, place, or object.

1.2.4.20 A paragraph that summarizes ideas read or heard

2. Each boxed communication will be introduced with a brief, parenthesized assignment sentence which describes the purpose, topic, audience, and form of the communication.

3. The boxed communications will reflect the types of writing likely to be composed by seventh grade students.

4. Excluding the parenthesized assignment sentence, no more than five sentences (including the blank sentence) will be used in the communication. Sentences will contain no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List.

5. All communications (before a sentence has been deleted) will contain a focusing sentence.

6. A topic will be developed in one of two ways:

- through narration of a sequence of events
- through presentation of details or support.

7. All communications (before a sentence has been deleted) will contain a concluding sentence.

8. In each communication, one sentence will be deleted and represented by a blank line in the display. Any sentence in the communication may be deleted.

Description of Answer Choices

A set of four answer choices will follow each test question. Each answer choice will be a complete, gramatically correct sentence of one of the following types:

(1) A focusing sentence

(2) A beginning sentence which lacks a focusing element

(3) A concluding sentence

(4) An ending sentence which lacks a concluding element

(5) A continuing sentence

(6) A sentence which is out of sequence

(7) A sentence that is irrelevant

(8) A sentence that is redundant.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the selections in the boxes. Each one has a blank where a sentence is missing. Read the question after each selection which relates to the passage. Then choose the sentence for the blank that best answers the question. Mark the letter of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

1. This note was written by Clark to his friend Ken, thanking him for a birthday present.

May 13, 1983

Dear Ken,

_____

_____. The card was really funny, and my whole family laughed at it. It was good of you to send me a book about airplane gliders, my favorite topic. To close, I guess all I can say is thanks again for a great birthday package!

Your friend,

Clark

Which one of the following sentences can best be used to BEGIN the note?

(A) It's always nice to be remembered on your birthday. (irrelevant)

(B) The book about airplane gliders was a terrific present. (redundant)

(C) Thank you for sending me the birthday card and present. (correct)

(D) As you know, I recently celebrated my thirteenth birthday. (beginning)

2. This paragraph is part of a story about a girl written by a student for her teacher.

Rayleen acted very shy at her new school. During recesses she stayed by herself. _____

_____.

Once, when she hurt her foot in gym class, instead of asking for help she just cried softly. Being so shy finally made Rayleen feel very lonely.

Which one of the following sentences can best be used to CONTINUE the paragraph?

(A) Rayleen was always alone between classes. (redundant)

(B) Rayleen had a younger brother who was also at the school. (irrelevant)

(C) Rayleen never said anything in class. (correct)

(D) Rayleen had been in four different schools in the past five years. (focusing)

3. A student wrote this letter of complaint to a company.

120 14th Street
Ocean City, Maryland 21842
June 14, 1982

Customer Agent
Allway Cleaning Products
230 Center Street
Waukegan, Illinois 60085

Dear Customer Agent:

I am writing to complain about your "Whiz-it" spot remover. This product does not remove chocolate stains as you claim it will. I tried using it to remove a chocolate stain on a plain cotton blouse. The "Whiz-it" not only left the stain, it also faded the area around the stain. _____

_____

_____

Sincerely,

Mary Baker

Which one of the following sentences can best be used to END the letter?

(A) This letter is to complain about "Whiz-it" spot remover. (redundant)

(B) I like to wear that blouse with my navy blue pants. (irrelevant)

(C) I recently purchased a bottle of your "Whiz-it" spot remover. (beginning)

(D) I think you should at least refund my money for the cost of the "Whiz-it." (correct)

31

LEVEL I
DOMAIN IV
SENTENCE FORMATION

General Description

The student will be presented with one or more sentences from a written communication and asked to select from among four choices the best way to either combine or expand the information given. The correct answer will be a grammatically correct simple, compound, or complex sentence that contains all of the information requested.

Description of Test Questions

A test question will be based on either sentence combination or sentence expansion. Both types of test questions will be preceded by a boxed excerpt from a written communication. This excerpt will contain no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List.

Description of Answer Choices

1. A set of four answer choices will follow each test question. Each answer choice will contain no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List.

2. All four answer choices for a test question will present a different version of the same combined or expanded sentence. The correct answer choice will be the version that (a) is a grammatically correct simple, compound, or complex sentence and that (b) contains all of the information given.

3. In a given set of test questions, correct answer choices will be equally distributed among simple, compound, and complex sentences. These sentences will exemplify as wide a range of sentence patterns and constructions as possible.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the selections in the boxes and the question that follows each box. Answer the question by selecting one of the four choices. The correct choice will be one complete sentence which does not leave out information or change the meaning of the boxed selection. Mark the letter of the correct answer on your answer sheet.

1.

We're having a party. The party is on Tuesday evening. Tuesday is the 27th of September.

Which one of the following is the best way to COMBINE the sentences above without changing the meaning and without leaving out information?

(A) We're having a party on Tuesday evening, Tuesday is the 27th of September. (run-on sentence)

(B) We're having a party on Tuesday evening, September 27th. (correct)

(C) On Tuesday evening we're having a party. (information omitted)

(D) Our party on Tuesday evening, the 27th of September. (sentence fragment)

2.

My bike was hit by a car.

Which one of the following is the best way to ADD INFORMATION to the sentence above?

(A) When my new ten-speed bike was hit by a foreign car. (sentence fragment)

(B) My bike is a new ten-speed it was hit by a foreign car. (run-on)

(C) My new bike was hit. (information omitted)

(D) My new ten-speed bike was hit by a foreign car. (correct)

LEVEL I
DOMAIN V
CONVENTIONS OF WRITING

General Description

The student will be presented with a brief written communication. Three specific corrections will be suggested for the communication. Each will be a single correction in either spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, or commonly accepted formats of written correspondence. The student will indicate whether one of these changes needs to be made, or whether the communication is correct as it stands.

Description of Test Questions

1. A test question will be preceded by a boxed written communication with numbered elements. Each communication will be one of the following from the Declared Competencies Index:

- 1.2.1.1 A message with time entries
- 1.2.1.3 Written directions to a specified location
- 1.2.1.6 Minutes of a meeting
- 1.2.1.7 An accident report
- 1.2.1.8 A resume
- 1.2.1.9 A bill or receipt
- 1.2.2.1 A friendly letter
- 1.2.2.3 A letter of response to an invitation received
- 1.2.2.4 A thank-you note
- 1.2.2.6 An invitation
- 1.2.2.10 A letter of application for a job
- 1.2.2.11 A letter of complaint to a company
- 1.2.2.13 A letter of request in business letter form
- 1.2.2.14 A letter of response to a letter received
- 1.2.4.16 A paragraph that is developed through narration
- 1.2.4.17 A paragraph that explains a process
- 1.2.4.18 A paragraph written in response to a question
- 1.2.4.19 A paragraph that describes a person, place, or object
- 1.2.4.20 A paragraph that summarizes ideas read or heard

2. All written communications will reflect types of writing likely to be familiar to seventh grade students.

3. Sentences will contain no words above a fifth grade level as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List. Each communication will exemplify as wide a range of sentence patterns and constructions as possible.

4. Each communication may contain a single error in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, or format, or it may contain no errors.

5. In a given set of items, an attempt should be made to exemplify as many different eligible spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usages, and format usages as possible.

Description of Answer Choices

1. A set of four answer choices will follow each item.

2. Each of the first three answer choices for a test question will be based on a single error or correct usage in the excerpt.

3. The exact form of a response alternative will depend upon whether spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, or format is being tested.

4. The correct answer choice will result from either: (1) identifying the change needed to correct the error present in an excerpt or (2) indicating that no correction is needed, when indeed the excerpt is entirely correct.

Sample Items

Directions: Read the selections in the boxes carefully. Find the numbered line containing an error in spelling, capitalization, punctuation, word usage, or letter form. Mark the letter for that line on your answer sheet. If no corrections are needed, mark space D on your answer sheet.

1.

1	**Dear Aunt Sophie,**
2	**I can't thank you enough for the**
3	**money you gave me for my birthday.**
4	**I'm going to save it toward a trip to**
5	**Canada. Two of my freinds and I hope**
6	**to backpack there when we finally**
7	**have enough money.**
8	**Sincerely,**
9	**Alex**

Which one, if any, of the following corrections is needed above?

(A) Line 1: Make the A in Aunt a small letter.

(B) Line 5: Change the spelling of freinds (correct)

(C) Line 8: Remove the comma after Sincerely

(D) No corrections are needed.

2.

1	**I am sixteen years old and**
2	**a student at Adams High School. I**
3	**have never had a job before, but I**
4	**am a hard worker. I learn things**
5	**quickly, and follow directions well.**

Which one, if any, of the following corrections is needed above?

(A) Line 2: Change the capital letter S to a small letter in School

(B) Line 3: Change the word have to haven't

(C) Line 5: Remove the comma after quickly (correct)

(D) No corrections are needed.

CAPITALIZATION RULES ELIGIBLE FOR TESTING

1. Initial capitals are required for:
   a. the first word of a sentence (e.g., The king is dead.)
   b. names of days of the week (e.g., Monday, Saturday)
   c. names of months of the year (e.g., March, September)
   d. the pronoun I
   e. names, including initials, of individuals (e.g., John R. Doe)
   f. titles which precede individuals' names (e.g., Mr., Mrs., Doctor, Senator)
   g. all the words in names of holidays, except prepositions and articles (e.g., the Fourth of July)
   h. all the words in the salutation of a letter except non-initial conjunctions, articles, and prepositions (e.g., Dear Sir or Madam)
   i. the first word in the complimentary close of a letter (e.g., Sincerely yours,)
   j. family relationship names, either used alone or followed by a personal name (e.g., I saw Grandpa Smith downtown today.)
   k. all words in the names of specific geographical locations, except prepositions, conjunctions, and articles (e.g., the Avenue of the Americas, Rocky Mountains, Florida)
   l. all the words in names of specific organizations and agencies, except prepositions, conjunctions, and articles (e.g., Boy Scouts of America, National Aeronautics and Space Administration)
   m. names of languages (e.g., Spanish, German)
   n. names of races (e.g., She is a famous Black writer.)
   o. names of nationalities (e.g., Polish, Swedish)
   p. names of religions (e.g., Episcopalian, Baptist) and names of deities (e.g., Jehovah)
   q. adjectives formed from names of geographical locations, languages, races, nationalities, and religions (e.g., He was a famous Italian painter in the 17th century.)
   r. the first word and all other words in titles of books, articles, works of art, etc., except short prepositions, conjunctions, and articles (e.g., The Wind in the Willows)

2. Initial capitals are never used for:
   a. common nouns (example of error: My Car broke down yesterday.)
   b. adjectives not based on proper nouns (example of error: My Blue car needs to be washed.)
   c. words other than the first word in the complimentary close of a letter (example of error: Sincerely Yours,)
   d. prepositions, conjunctions, or articles in the names of holidays, specific geographical locations, specific organizations and titles of books, articles, etc. (example of error: Fourth Of July, Gone With The Wind)
   e. family relationships which are preceded by a possessive noun or pronoun and not followed by a name (example of error: I was talking to my Brother.)
   f. family relationships which do not stand for a particular person (example of error: Do you have a Sister?)
   g. names of the seasons
   h. names of school subjects, except languages, those with proper adjectives, or course titles followed by a number (example of error: Physical Education, Mathematics)

PUNCTUATION RULES ELIGIBLE FOR TESTING

1. Periods are required:
   a. at the end of all declarative sentences, including indirect questions.
   b. after abbreviations.
2. Periods are never used:
   a. at the end of direct questions (example of error: Who knocked at the door.).
   b. to separate hours and minutes in time (example of error: 3.00 p.m.)
3. Question Marks are required:
   at the end of direct questions.
4. Question Marks are never used:
   at the end of indirect questions (example of error: She wanted to know who was at the door?).
5. Exclamation Marks are required:
   at the end of declarative or imperative sentences which express extremely strong feeling.

6. Exclamation Marks are never used:
   at the end of sentences which do not express strong feeling.

7. Commas are required:
   a. in a series of three or more words or phrases (the last comma being optional depending on intended meaning and/or style).
   b. between two long independent clauses joined by a coordinating conjunction.
   c. after the salutation in a friendly letter.
   d. after the complimentary close in a letter.
   e. between the independent parts of a date.
   f. between the independent parts of an address or geographical location.
   g. before a direct question.

8. Commas are never used:
   a. in a series of two words or phrases (example of error: my coat, and hat), except in the case of two adjectives which are not joined by "and"
   b. after abbreviations (example of error: Ms, Saunders)
   c. between the non-independent parts of an address or geographical name, including between the non-independent parts of a date (example of error: May, 1, 1980)
   d. between the non-independent parts of an address or geographical name, including between the name of a state and a zip code (example of error: United States, of America)
   e. after the salutation in a business letter (example of error: Dear Sirs,)
   f. between the parts of a compound predicate (example of error: Sue went home, and then called me.)
   g. to separate two independent clauses without a coordinating conjunction (run-on sentence) (example of error: Fred runs every day, he is getting ready for the big race.)

9. Apostrophes are required:
   a. to form possessive nouns.
   b. to form contractions.

10. Apostrophes are never used:
    a. in plural nouns that are not possessive (example of error: Their friends's came with us.)
    b. with possessive pronouns (example of error: The book is her's.)

11. Colons are required:
    a. to separate hours and minutes in time.
    b. after the salutation in a business letter.

12. Hyphens are required:
    for syllabication at the end of a line.

ELIGIBLE FOR TESTING SPELLING WORDS

The 1000 words on this spelling list are the 1000 most frequently occurring English words as determined by a study conducted by John B. Carroll, Peter Davies, and Barry Richman. This study analyzed 5,000,000 running words of text taken from textbooks in 17 different curriculum areas in grades three through nine, plus magazines, books, newspapers, and poetry. The study resulted in the publication of The American Heritage Word Frequency Book, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971. This book contains an alphabetical listing of 87,000 words accompanied by the frequency with which each word appears in print.

The Carroll study was subsequently drawn upon by Elizabeth Sakiey and Edward Fry to produce 3000 Instant Words, Dreir Educational Systems: New Jersey, 1979. The Sakiey and Fry book provides the 3000 most frequently occurring words listed according to their frequency of usage in print, beginning with the most frequently occurring word, then the second most frequently occurring word, and so on. This listing has been used as the source for the 1000 words on this spelling list.

1. the
2. of
3. and
4. a
5. to
6. in
7. is
8. you
9. that
10. it
11. he
12. was
13. for
14. on
15. are
16. as
17. with
18. his
19. they
20. I
21. at
22. be
23. this
24. have
25. from
26. or
27. one
28. had
29. by
30. words
31. but
32. not
33. what
34. all
35. were
36. we
37. when
38. your
39. can
40. said
41. there
42. use
43. an
44. each
45. which
46. she
47. do
48. how
49. their
50. it
51. will
52. up
53. other
54. about
55. out
56. many
57. then
58. them
59. these
60. so
61. some
62. her
63. would
64. make
65. like
66. him
67. into
68. time
69. has
70. look
71. two
72. more
73. write
74. go
75. see
76. number
77. no
78. way
79. could
80. people
81. my
82. than
83. first
84. water
85. been
86. called
87. who
88. oil
89. its
90. now
91. find
92. long
93. down
94. day
95. did
96. get
97. come
98. made
99. may
100. part
101. over
102. new
103. sound
104. take
105. only
106. little
107. work
108. know
109. place
110. years
111. live
112. me
113. back
114. give
115. most
116. very
117. after
118. things
119. our
120. just
121. name
122. good
123. sentence
124. man
125. think
126. say
127. great
128. where
129. help
130. through
131. much
132. before
133. line
134. right
135. too
136. means
137. old
138. any
139. same
140. tell
141. boy
142. following
143. came
144. want
145. show
146. also
147. around
148. form
149. three
150. small
151. set
152. put
153. end
154. does
155. another

156. well
157. large
158. must
159. big
160. even
161. such
162. because
163. turned
164. here
165. why
166. asked
167. went
168. men
169. read
170. need
171. land
172. different
173. home
174. us
175. move
176. try
177. kind
178. hand
179. picture
180. again
181. change
182. off
183. play
184. spell
185. air
186. away
187. animals
188. house
189. point
190. page
191. letters
192. mother
193. answer
194. found
195. study
196. still
197. learn
198. should
199. American
200. world
201. high
202. every
203. near
204. add
205. food
206. between
207. own
208. below
209. country
210. plants
211. last
212. school
213. father
214. keep
215. trees
216. never
217. started
218. city
219. earth
220. eyes
221. light
222. thought
223. head
224. under
225. story
226. saw
227. left
228. don't
229. few
230. while
231. along
232. might
233. close
234. something
235. seemed
236. next
237. hard
238. open
239. example
240. beginning
241. life
242. always
243. those
244. both
245. paper
246. together
247. got
248. group
249. often
250. run
251. important
252. until
253. children
254. side
255. feet
256. car
257. miles
258. night
259. walked
260. white
261. sea
262. began
263. grow
264. took
265. river
266. four
267. carry
268. state
269. once
270. book
271. hear
272. stop
273. without
274. second
275. later
276. miss
277. idea
278. enough
279. eat
280. face
281. watch
282. far
283. Indians
284. really
285. almost
286. let
287. above
288. girl
289. sometimes
290. mountains
291. cut
292. young
293. talk
294. soon
295. list
296. song
297. being
298. leave
299. family
300. it's
301. body
302. music
303. color
304. stand
305. sun
306. questions
307. fish
308. area
309. mark
310. dog
311. horse
312. birds
313. problem
314. complete
315. room
316. knew
317. since
318. ever
319. piece
320. told
321. usually
322. didn't
323. friends
324. easy
325. heard
326. order
327. red
328. door
329. sure
330. become
331. top
332. ship
333. across
334. today
335. during
336. short
337. better
338. best
339. however
340. low
341. hours
342. black
343. products
344. happened
345. whole
346. measure
347. remember
348. early
349. waves
350. reached
351. listen
352. wind
353. rock
354. space
355. covered
356. fast
357. several
358. hold
359. himself
360. toward
361. five
362. step
363. morning
364. passed
365. vowel
366. true
367. hundred
368. against
369. pattern
370. numeral
371. table
372. north
373. slowly
374. money
375. map
376. farm
377. pulled
378. draw
379. voice
380. seen
381. cold
382. cried
383. plan

384. notice
385. south
386. sing
387. war
388. ground
389. fall
390. king
391. town
392. I'll
393. unit
394. figure
395. certain
396. field
397. travel
398. wood
399. fire
400. upon
401. done
402. English
403. road
404. half
405. ten
406. fly
407. gave
408. box
409. finally
410. wait
411. correct
412. oh
413. quickly
414. person
415. became
416. shown
417. minutes
418. strong
419. verb
420. stars
421. front
422. feel
423. fact
424. inches
425. street
426. decided
427. contain
428. course
429. surface
430. produce
431. building
432. ocean
433. class
434. note
435. nothing
436. rest
437. carefully
438. scientists
439. inside
440. wheels
441. stay
442. green
443. known
444. island
445. week
446. less
447. machine
448. base
449. ago
450. stood
451. plane
452. system
453. behind
454. ran
455. round
456. boat
457. game
458. force
459. brought
460. understand
461. warm
462. common
463. bring
464. explain
465. dry
466. though
467. language
468. shape
469. deep
470. thousands
471. yes
472. clear
473. equation
474. yet
475. government
476. filled
477. heat
478. full
479. hot
480. check
481. object
482. am
483. rule
484. among
485. noun
486. power
487. cannot
488. able
489. six
490. size
491. dark
492. ball
493. material
494. special
495. heavy
496. fine
497. pair
498. circle
499. include
500. built
501. can't
502. matter
503. square
504. syllables
505. perhaps
506. bill
507. felt
508. suddenly
509. test
510. direction
511. center
512. farmers
513. ready
514. anything
515. divided
516. general
517. energy
518. subject
519. Europe
520. moon
521. region
522. return
523. believe
524. dance
525. members
526. picked
527. simple
528. cells
529. paint
530. mind
531. love
532. cause
533. rain
534. exercise
535. eggs
536. train
537. blue
538. wish
539. drop
540. developed
541. window
542. difference
543. distance
544. heart
545. sit
546. sum
547. summer
548. wall
549. forest
550. probably
551. legs
552. sat
553. main
554. winter
555. wide
556. written
557. length
558. reason
559. kept
560. interest
561. arms
562. brother
563. race
564. present
565. beautiful
566. store
567. job
568. edge
569. past
570. sign
571. record
572. finished
573. discovered
574. wild
575. happy
576. beside
577. gone
578. sky
579. glass
580. million
581. west
582. lay
583. weather
584. root
585. instruments
586. meet
587. third
588. months
589. paragraph
590. raised
591. represent
592. soft
593. whether
594. clothes
595. flowers
596. shall
597. teacher
598. held
599. describe
600. drive
601. cross
602. speak
603. solve
604. appear
605. metal
606. son
607. either
608. ice
609. sleep
610. village
611. factors

612. result
613. jumped
614. snow
615. ride
616. care
617. floor
618. hill
619. pushed
620. baby
621. buy
622. century
623. outside
624. everything
625. tall
626. already
627. instead
628. phrase
629. soil
630. bed
631. copy
632. free
633. hope
634. spring
635. case
636. laughed
637. nation
638. quite
639. type
640. themselves
641. temperature
642. bright
643. lead
644. everyone
645. method
646. section
647. lake
648. consonant
649. within
650. dictionary
651. hair
652. age
653. amount
654. scale
655. pounds
656. although
657. per
658. broken
659. moment
660. tiny
661. possible
662. gold
663. milk
664. quiet
665. natural
666. lot
667. stone
668. act
669. build
670. middle
671. speed
672. count
673. cat
674. someone
675. sail
676. rolled
677. bear
678. wonder
679. smiled
680. angle
681. fraction
682. Africa
683. killed
684. melody
685. bottom
686. trip
687. hole
688. poor
689. let's
690. fight
691. surprise
692. French
693. died
694. beat
695. exactly
696. remain
697. dress
698. iron
699. couldn't
700. fingers
701. row
702. least
703. catch
704. climbed
705. wrote
706. shouted
707. continued
708. itself
709. else
710. plains
711. gas
712. England
713. burning
714. design
715. joined
716. foot
717. law
718. ears
719. grass
720. you're
721. grew
722. skin
723. valley
724. cents
725. key
726. president
727. brown
728. trouble
729. cool
730. cloud
731. lost
732. sent
733. symbols
734. wear
735. bad
736. save
737. experiment
738. engine
739. alone
740. drawing
741. east
742. pay
743. single
744. touch
745. information
746. express
747. mouth
748. yard
749. equal
750. decimal
751. yourself
752. control
753. practice
754. report
755. straight
756. rise
757. statement
758. stick
759. party
760. seeds
761. suppose
762. woman
763. coast
764. bank
765. period
766. wire
767. choose
768. clean
769. visit
770. bit
771. whose
772. received
773. garden
774. please
775. strange
776. caught
777. fell
778. team
779. God
780. captain
781. direct
782. ring
783. serve
784. child
785. desert
786. increase
787. history
788. cost
789. maybe
790. business
791. separate
792. break
793. uncle
794. hunting
795. flow
796. lady
797. students
798. human
799. art
800. feeling
801. supply
802. corner
803. electric
804. insects
805. crops
806. tone
807. hit
808. sand
809. doctor
810. provide
811. thus
812. won't
813. cook
814. bones
815. tail
816. board
817. modern
818. compound
819. mine
820. wasn't
821. fit
822. addition
823. belong
824. safe
825. soldiers
826. guess
827. silent
828. trade
829. rather
830. compare
831. crowd
832. poem
833. enjoy
834. elements
835. indicate
836. except
837. expect
838. flat
839. seven

840. interesting
841. sense
842. string
843. blow
844. famous
845. value
846. wings
847. movement
848. pole
849. exciting
850. branches
851. thick
852. blood
853. lie
854. spot
855. bell
856. fun
857. loud
858. consider
859. suggested
860. thin
861. position
862. entered
863. fruit
864. tied
865. rich
866. dollars
867. send
868. sight
869. chief
870. Japanese
871. stream
872. planets
873. rhythm
874. eight
875. science
876. major
877. observe
878. tube
879. necessary
880. weight
881. meat
882. lifted
883. process
884. army
885. hat
886. property
887. particular
888. swim
889. terms
890. current
891. park
892. sell
893. shoulder
894. industry
895. wash
896. block
897. spread
898. cattle
899. wife
900. sharp
901. company
902. radio
903. we'll
904. action
905. capital
906. factories
907. settled
908. yellow
909. isn't
910. southern
911. truck
912. fair
913. printed
914. wouldn't
915. ahead
916. chance
917. born
918. level
919. triangle
920. molecules
921. France
922. repeated
923. column
924. western
925. church
926. sister
927. oxygen
928. plural
929. various
930. agreed
931. opposite
932. wrong
933. chart
934. prepared
935. pretty
936. solution
937. fresh
938. shop
939. suffix
940. especially
941. shoes
942. actually
943. nose
944. afraid
945. dead
946. sugar
947. adjective
948. fig
949. office
950. huge
951. gun
952. similar
953. death
954. score
955. forward
956. stretched
957. experience
958. rose
959. allow
960. fear
961. workers
962. Washington
963. Greek
964. women
965. bought
966. led
967. March
968. northern
969. create
970. British
971. difficult
972. match
973. win
974. doesn't
975. steel
976. total
977. deal
978. determine
979. evening
980. nor
981. rope
982. cotton
983. apple
984. details
985. entire
986. corn
987. substances
988. smell
989. tools
990. conditions
991. cows
992. track
993. arrived
994. located
995. sir
996. seat
997. division
998. effect
999. underline
1000. view

SPELLING RULES ELIGIBLE FOR TESTING

In addition to the 1000 words appearing on the spelling list, inflected verbs, plurals of nouns, and words with affixes may also be tested in accordance with the following stipulations:

1. Inflected verbs: All common inflections of a listed verb are eligible for testing. Such testing must be based on the spelling of a verb form as opposed to its grammatical conjugation. (For example, "blew," the past tense of the verb "blow," could be tested by misspelling in the forms "blue," "blu," or "bloo," but not as "blowed.")

2. Plurals of nouns: The plural of a listed noun may be tested if it conforms to one of the following rules for forming plurals:

   a. Nouns ending with letters other than s, x, sh, ch, or y form their plurals by adding -s.

   b. Nouns ending in s, x, sh, or ch form their plurals by adding -es.

   c. Nouns ending in y preceded by a consonant drop the y and add -ies to form their plurals. Nouns ending in y preceded by a vowel form their plurals by adding -s.

3. Words with affixes: A common affix may be added to any listed word if the resulting word conforms to the following rules for spelling and difficulty level:

   a. Spelling rules

      (1) The spelling of the base (root) word is not changed by the addition of a prefix.

      (2) A final consonant in the base (root) word is doubled before a suffix if all three of the following conditions are met:

         (a) it is a single consonant.

         (b) it is preceded by a single vowel.

         (c) it is at the end of an accented syllable.

      (3) A final e in the base (root) word is dropped before a suffix beginning with a vowel and retained before a suffix beginning with a consonant.

      (4) A final y in a base (root) word is changed to i before any suffix except -ing.

   b. Difficulty rules

      (1) If a word formed by adding an affix is sufficiently different from the base word to appear as a separate entry in the IOX Basic Skills Word List, it may not be used if it is listed at higher than a fifth grade reading level.

      (2) Affixes which can themselves be spelled in more than one way without any clear difference in pronunciation (e.g., "-able," "-ible," "-ar," "-ir," "-or") will not be used to form words for testing.

USAGE RULES ELIGIBLE FOR TESTING

I. NOUN USAGE

A. Noun agreement Nouns used as the subject of a clause or a sentence must agree in person and number with the predicate of the clause.

B. Noun declension Plurals of nouns must be formed correctly.

C. Specific noun usage problem Collective nouns are used with plural verbs when the speaker or writer is referring to the individual parts or members of the group acting separately. They are used with singular verbs when the statement refers to the group acting together as a unit. (Collective nouns eligible for testing are those at a fifth grade level or lower on the IOX Basic Skills Word List).

II. VERB USAGE

A. Verb agreement Verbs must agree in person and number with the subject of a clause or a sentence.

B. Verb conjugation Verbs must be conjugated correctly.

C. Specific verb usage problems The following constructions are incorrect:

1. The word "of" in place of a form of the auxiliary verb "have" (e.g., "should of come")

2. The nonstandard verb form "ain't" (e.g., "I ain't going")

3. The substitution of a transitive verb for an intransitive verb, or vice-versa, when two verbs are commonly confused. Some verb pairs eligible for testing are: "set" and "sit," "lay" and "lie," "raise" and "rise" (e.g., "I laid down").

III. PRONOUN USAGE

A. Pronoun case The nominative case of a pronoun must be used in all simple or compound subjects of sentences or clauses. The

objective case of a pronoun must be used in all simple or compound objects of verbs or prepositions.

B. Specific pronoun usage problems The following constructions are incorrect:

1. A pronoun that renames the noun subject of a clause, in effect "doubling" that subject (e.g., "my friend he")
2. Any of the following nonstandard forms of personal pronouns: hisself, ourself, themselfs, theirselves, theirselfs (e.g., "We did it ourself")

IV. ADJECTIVE/ADVERB USAGE

A. Negation Only one negative word may be used to negate the same idea in a sentence.

B. Adjective and adverb form The comparative and superlative forms of all adjectives and adverbs must be formed correctly.

C. Adjective and adverb use An adjective must be used to modify a noun or pronoun. An adverb must be used to modify any other part of speech.

D. Specific adjective and adverb problems The following construction is incorrect:

1. Using the pronoun "them" in place of the adjective "those" (e.g., "them books")

FORMATS ELIGIBLE FOR TESTING

Letters: One of the major forms of written communication in the Declared Competencies Index is the letter. Both business and friendly letters are listed.

1. Friendly letter: The following five components should be included in a friendly letter:
   a. Heading—only date and/or address should be considered for testing
   b. Salutation
   c. Body—should be in paragraph form as a minimum
   d. Closing
   e. Signature

   These elements should be found in the order as listed above. However, due to many acceptable letter styles, we cannot specify a particular one. Thus, we should not be concerned with one form of indentation, spatial position on page, and alignment.

2. Business letter: The following six components should be included in a business letter:
   a. Heading—must include date and complete address
   b. Inside address—full address of recipient
   c. Salutation
   d. Body—should be in paragraph form
   e. Closing
   f. Signature

   These elements should be found in the order as listed above. However, due to many acceptable letter styles, we cannot specify a particular one. Thus, we should not be concerned with one correct form of indentation, spatial position on page, and alignment. Students should consistently adhere to one chosen format, however.

LEVEL II
DOMAIN I
NARRATIVE WRITING

General Description

The student will be presented with a writing prompt designed to elicit narrative writing. The prompt will specify the occasion, topic, audience, purpose, and form for the written communication that it requests. The student response will be evaluated using modified holistic scoring procedures based upon the criteria of content, organization, audience, sentence formation, and the conventions of edited American English. Nonmastery papers will be evaluated using analytic scoring procedures also.

Description of Test Questions

1. A test item or writing prompt will be designed to elicit narrative writing. This type of writing is used to communicate an understandable sequence of events. It presents events and details in a chronological order. Details based on the senses may be used to describe what can be seen, heard, tasted, touched, or smelled. Good narrative writing is characterized by a clear sequence of events or ideas and by appropriate elaboration for those events and ideas.

2. A writing prompt will consist of a specific narrative writing assignment, several prewriting suggestions relevant to that assignment, and a restatement of the original assignment.

3. The prompt will begin by establishing a writing occasion and then will present the topic, audience, purpose, and form for the written communication that is being requested.

4. All writing occasions and writing topics must be free of cultural, racial, sexual, handicapping, and geographical bias, taking into account the fact that Maryland students come from rural as well as urban backgrounds.

5. The audience for a written communication is the individual or individuals for whom the communication is intended. A test question will specify a known audience. A known audience may be any individual or group of individuals likely to be familiar to students, for example, a teacher, relative, friend, classmate, counselor, or school administrator.

6. The purpose for a written communication is the reason that an individual has for writing. A writing prompt will be based on a single purpose selected from among the following eligible objectives from the Declared Competencies Index:

1.2.2.1 Write a friendly letter

1.2.2.3 Write an answer to an invitation

1.2.2.14 Write a letter of response to a letter received

1.2.4.16 Write a paragraph that is developed through narration

1.2.4.19 Write a paragraph that describes a person, place, or object

7. All words used in a writing prompt will be sixth grade level or lower, as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List. A prompt will contain no more than 150 words.

Sample Items

Suppose that you have a cousin who lives in another part of the state. This cousin was unable to be with you on your last birthday. You would like to share that day's events with your cousin. Write a letter telling your cousin what happened on your birthday.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about what made your Birthday special. Think about how the day began, what you did during the day, and how the day came to an end. Remember how you felt when your birthday was over.

Now write a letter, telling your cousin what happened on your last birthday.

Objective 1.2.4.16

Suppose that as a class assignment your teacher has asked you to write about a holiday celebration. Remember a time when you celebrated an enjoyable holiday. Write a paragraph for your classmates telling about this holiday celebration.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about the many different holidays you have celebrated. Choose one holiday and think about how it began. Think about what happened during the celebration and how it ended.

Now write a paragraph for your classmates, telling about your holiday celebration.

Objective 1.2.2.1

LEVEL II
DOMAIN II
EXPLANATORY WRITING

General Description

The student will be presented with a writing prompt designed to elicit explanatory writing. The prompt will specify the occasion, topic, audience, purpose, and form for the written communication that it requests. The student response will be evaluated using modified holistic scoring procedures based upon the criteria of content, organization, audience, sentence formation, and the conventions of edited American English. Nonmastery responses will be evaluated using analytic scoring procedures also.

Description of Test Questions

1. A test item or writing prompt will be designed to elicit explanatory writing. This type of writing is used to explain ideas, reasons, processes, points of view, etc. Good explanatory writing is characterized by the clarity and completeness of the explanation that it presents.

2. A writing prompt will consist of a specific explanatory writing assignment, several prewriting suggestions relevant to the assignment, and a restatement of the original assignment.

3. The first paragraph of the prompt will begin by establishing a writing occasion and then will present the topic, audience, purpose, and form for the written communication that is being requested.

4. All writing occasions and writing topics must be free of cultural, racial, sexual, handicapping, and geographical bias, taking into account the fact that Maryland students come from rural as well as urban backgrounds.

5. The audience for a written communication is the individual or individuals for whom the communication is intended. A test question will specify either a known or unknown audience. A known audience may be any individual or group of individuals likely to be familiar to students, for example, a teacher, relative, friend, counselor, or school administrator. An unknown audience may be any individual or group of individuals likely to be unfamiliar to students, for example, a prospective employer, public official, representative of an organization, or newspaper editor.

6. The purpose for a written communication is the reason that an individual has for writing. A writing prompt will be based on a single purpose selected from among the following eligible objectives from the Declared Competencies Index:

- 1.2.1.3 Write directions to a specified location
- 1.2.1.7 Write an accident report
- 1.2.2.4 Write a thank-you note
- 1.2.2.6 Write an invitation
- 1.2.2.10 Write a letter of application for a job
- 1.2.2.11 Write a letter of complaint to a company
- 1.2.2.13 Write a letter of request in business letter form
- 1.2.2.14 Write a letter of response to a letter received
- 1.2.4.17 Write a paragraph that explains a process
- 1.2.4.18 Write a paragraph in response to a question
- 1.2.4.19 Write a paragraph that describes a person, place, or object
- 1.2.4.20 Write a paragraph to summarize ideas read or heard

7. All words used in a writing prompt will be sixth grade level or lower, as judged by the IOX Basic Skills Word List. A prompt will contain no more than 150 words.

Sample Items

Suppose you have been asked to write a report on Maryland's state parks for your social studies class. Write a business letter to the Public Information Officer of the Maryland Park Service asking for information for your report.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about the information you will need. This might include the names and locations of the state parks, the kinds of services and activities offered, and the rules and regulations that park visitors must follow.

Now write a business letter to the Public Information Officer of the Maryland Park Service, asking for information about Maryland's state parks.

Objective 1.2.2.13

Suppose that your principal has asked your class, "Should the students at this school wear uniforms?" Write a paragraph for the principal, explaining your view on whether school uniforms should be adopted.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about the good and bad points of school uniforms. Consider what it would be like if everyone wore similar clothes to school. Consider what it would be like if students continued to wear what they wanted. Decide whether you think uniforms would be an improvement or whether things should stay as they are.

Now write a paragraph, explaining to the principal your views on school uniforms.

Objective 1.2.4.18

CHAPTER 3

MARYLAND FUNCTIONAL WRITING TEST

Spring 1983

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Make certain you have blackened the appropriate circles on your answer sheet with the three digit **TEST FORM NUMBER.**

Make certain you have blackened the appropriate circles on your answer sheet with the five digit **TEST SECURITY NUMBER.** This five digit number MUST appear in columns **B through F** of the **SPECIAL CODES** section on your answer sheet. When you have finished reading these instructions, put your answer sheet inside the front cover of this test booklet.

This test booklet contains two assigned writing topics. Please do not break the seal on Topic #2 at this time.

You are to write on Writing Topic #1 now. Write your first draft in pencil using the space provided in your booklet. This first draft will not be scored.

When you finish your first draft, read it over. Use the Writing Revision Checklist to help improve your writing. Then write your final copy on the lined sheet of paper provided in your booklet for Topic #1. You may use handwriting or printing when you write your final copy. Be sure to use a pen and to write clearly so that your work can be read easily. Only the writing on the lined paper will be scored.

When you finish working on Writing Topic #1, close your booklet and wait for further directions.

Suppose that you have just watched or heard a performance by your favorite musical group. You enjoyed the performance so much that you want to share your experience with someone else. Write a letter telling one of your friends about the performance.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about how the performance began. Think about what happened during the performance and how the performance ended.

Now write a letter, telling your friend about the performance of your favorite musical group.

Note: You may use any name and address for your letter. You will not be scored on whether the information you use is correct, but you will be scored on correct letter form.

* *

Use the space below to write your draft of **TOPIC #1.**

MARYLAND FUNCTIONAL WRITING TEST

WRITING REVISION CHECKLIST

_____ 1. Did you write on the assigned topic?

_____ 2. Do your details support your topic?

_____ 3. Did you put your ideas in a clear order?

_____ 4. Did you use complete sentences?

5. Did you:
_____ capitalize correctly?
_____ spell correctly?
_____ punctuate correctly?

_____ 6. Did you use words correctly?

_____ 7. Did you use the right form for a letter or a paragraph?

_____ 8. Did you write neatly?

MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

1983

NARRATIVE DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE

Score point 1 = These papers are usually brief. They have sufficient evidence the writer saw the topic and attempted to respond to it, but the writer does not sustain any of the ideas.

- The writing task is attempted.
- The organizational strategy is unclear.
- Sequencing or listing is confused with no linking or disjointed events.
- Elaboration is not present.
- The audience may not be addressed.
- Errors in sentence formation interfere with meaning and cause confusion.
- Errors in conventions interfere with meaning and cause confusion.

Score point 2 = These papers typically have specific details, but the details are not usually elaborated.

- An organizational strategy is apparent but poorly executed, causing flow or progression problems.
- Sequencing is weak for one of the following reasons:
  1. contains listing of details with perhaps some linking;
  2. is controlled but is brief and contains few details;
  3. is controlled but control is not maintained; or
  4. is not controlled initially but control is then established.
- Although there may be elaboration of some of the details, there is little if any development.
- Irrelevant information, if present, interferes with meaning.
- An attempt is made to address the audience.
- Errors in sentence formation, if present, do not interfere with meaning.
- Errors in conventions, if present, do not interfere with meaning.

Score point 3 = These papers are organized and controlled. The details are at least somewhat elaborated; however, the papers are not fully developed.

- The writing task is addressed consistently.
- A sequence of linked details is present.
- Details are not evenly elaborated although there may be some development.
- Irrelevant information, if present, does not interfere with meaning.
- The intended audience is addressed.
- Errors in sentence formation, if present, do not interfere with meaning.
- Errors in conventions, if present, do not interfere with meaning.

Score point 4 = These papers typically have enough or more information to complete the task. The information is clearly developed and the response reads as a unified whole.

- The writing task is addressed consistently.
- Organizational strategy is sustained and the response reads smoothly.
- The sequencing of details is clear and consistent.
- The paper is evenly developed through elaboration of details.
- All information is relevant.
- The intended audience is addressed.
- Errors in sentence formation, if present, do not interfere with meaning.
- Errors in conventions, if present, do not interfere with meaning.

NON-SCOREABLE RESPONSES (NSR)

5 Illegible—handwriting, indecipherable, incoherent

6 Insufficient response

7 In a language other than English

8 Off topic

9 Copying (e.g.: prompt, dictionary, textbook, poem, song)

10 "I don't know" or refusing to write on the topic

11 Blank papers

No. 1

WRITING TOPIC #1

Deor Jeff,
I went to the De star: carent I
had to wale for the tick eat
it was well the wate I he gace
a rerhord to the perst the car in
fro carent was good wed Thrit
you frd Bil

Rationale: This is a 1 paper. The writer clearly attempts the task. There are a few details, but the language control problems are severe enough to interfere with meaning. The paper is almost incoherent due to spelling errors.

Instructional Suggestions: A quick glance at this paper reveals the spelling difficulty this student has. While one is tempted to begin with spelling, that is not the place to start. Spelling can be dealt with in the editing stage. This student needs to say more about the topic, give more details. Help with the prewriting stage would be most beneficial.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear John,

The concert was really good they started out by singing a song. Then they had a light show for about 15 min — Then they finished it up with a song.

Sincerley Yours,

Rationale: This is a 1 paper. The writer clearly attempts the task; however, the paper is basically a short answer response to the prompt. Although there is some linking, there are no specific details about the concert nor is there any elaboration.

Instructional Suggestions: This student needs to learn some pre-writing strategies that would enable him to generate ideas—thinking about the topic, remembering any personal experiences. Simply telling the reader more about the performance would improve this paper.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Edward,

I watched a musical group of the Pit, last night. They sung our favorite song "Maria." The Pits ended with "My Girl." It was a super night. I hoped you watched

Yours truly

Rationale: This is a "bare bones" 2 paper. The lack of details is redeemed somewhat by the specificity of the songs. It is organized and has a logical progression. Anything less, however, and this response would be a 1.

Instructional Suggestions: This student needs to say more about the musical performance. Generating specific details would improve the paper.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Sam,

How are you? I'm fine.
I am writing to you about the "Def Leppard" concert, I went last Saturday at 8:00 pm and came home at 1:00Am

I know you told me to tell you how it was because you've never been to one of their concerts. It was dazzeling Joe Crocker sang, Photograph, Rock, Rock (Till you drop), Rock of Ages, High n' dry, and Its too late for love.

We also had 3rd row seats and I also got you a concert shirt. Just wanted to tell you what happened,

See you soon,

Jonathan

Rationale: This is a 2 paper. Although there are a fair number of details, the details are not linked or elaborated. In addition, the organization is weak.

Instructional Suggestions: This student has given some details about the concert, but has not elaborated on them. The writer might tell us more about the group on stage, what instruments they play, what clothes they wore, what, if any, special effects they used. The first and last paragraphs might be revised so that there are transitions to and from the concert.

BEST COPY

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Martin,

Led Zeppelin were great in concert, they performed "Rock in the Rain" for their first song, then Jimmy Page brake out into a 20:00 minute guitar solo that was very great, and captivating Then they played a few songs then played the mesemorizing "Stairway to Heaven?" Then they played for two hours, the performed "Rock and Roll", and the Immnigrant Song for two of the five encores. Then the stadium lit up with John Bohnans drums caught in fire, then all four of the members came up to the front of the stage and said thank you, good night, then bowed! Next time they came we and you will go.

Your friend,
Chris

Rationale: This is a 2 paper. It is a listing of details with some linking. Although there is some elaboration, there is little development.

Instructional Suggestions: This student might be asked to examine some models that use a variety of linking or transitional devices. "Then" is certainly appropriate, but its repetition makes the paper read like a list. More elaboration of the details present would help develop this paper. What did Jimmy Page do during his solo? How did the drums catch on fire?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAIL.

No. 6

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Kathy, Jan. 12, 1983

how are you? I am doing fine. Just recently I saw the greatest concert of my entire life! I saw Billy Squire at the cap. (capital) center. He was really good and I had a super super time! Well I just wanted to let you know about the concert and what a great time I had - I'll talk to you soon.

Lots of love,
Cindy

Rationale: This is a 2 paper. The writer's introduction and closing are appropriate for a friendly letter, but they do not develop the topic. Three sentences about the performance give the bare details (who, what, when) and these are not elaborated upon. "He was really good" tell little about the performance.

The writer has addressed the intended audience and has followed letter format.

Instructional Suggestions: This student might be asked to generate more details about the actual performance. "Good" and "super" really do not tell the reader much.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #1

Box 905 Redword Ave.
Newyork, Newyork 28740

Kenny

I went to see Jimmy Hendrix in Concert. When he first came out to play, Smoke rolled out of the ceiling and lights were flashing.

In the middle of the concert the drum player broke one of his drum sticks and he had to go get another set.

At the end they played their biggest hit louder than ever and thanked everyone and left.

Your friend,
Glenn

Rationale: This paper is a low 3. The organizational strategy follows the prompt's prewriting suggestions. It is a 3 because of the elaboration in each of the three paragraphs, although the last paragraph is weak. Anything less and this paper would have been a 2.

Instructional Suggestions: This writer has made a good start on handling the topic. Each detail has been elaborated, albeit briefly. The writer needs to see how little about the concert he has actually told the reader.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 8

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Susan,

On Friday night I went to a terrific concert. I went to the Capital Centre to see the Police. I wish you could have been there. When they first came out on stage the crowd began screaming and yelling for them to start singing. They played all my favorite songs.

Steward, the drummer is so cute. I decided to go back stage after the concert was over and got an autographed picture. I got one for you too.

your friend,
Shirley

P.S.
Hope you enjoy the picture!

Rationale: This is a 3 paper. The organizational strategy is controlled in this paper. The details are elaborated sufficiently for a 3.

Instructional Suggestions: This is certainly an adequate response to the topic. However, asking the writer questions about the information given would elicit more elaboration. What songs? How long did it take to get the autographed picture? Additional information is needed.

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Yvonne,

I want to tell you about the play Sharon, Tonya, Cathy and I attended. The title was "Purlie". Caty and Tonya thaught it was better than "The Wiz" at Kunbae

"Gait" Some of the songs were "Purlie" "Walk Him Up" and "One Way to Skin a Cat". My favorite was "First thing Monday Morning"

Althaugh we had a good time we wished you could have been there We are sending you a copy of the play and the words to the songs.

Yours, truly
Paula

Rationale: This is a short 3 paper. The writer selected a musical performance guide different from most but it is certainly an appropriate subject. There is little elaboration of the subject and thus the paper is not developed as well as it might have been. The lack of details, however, is somewhat redeemed by the flow of the paper. The writer has attended to audience and format (though one might suggest that the date be written out). The comma error ("yours, truly",) does not interfere with meaning and might have been a careless error judging from the writer's use of punctuation throughout the paper.

Instructional Suggestions: The writer might be encouraged to spend a little more time on prewriting. The prewriting suggestions in the prompt might provide a start. More information about the performance might be generated.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

October 22, 1982

Dear Paul,

We just got back from the Hot Dogs rock concert, it was excellent

We arrived there at about 8:00, the place was mobbed, but my sister and I found our seats. At about 8:15 all the lights in the stadium were turned off then suddenly with a blast of light and a bang the concert began. It was great with all the cheering, claping and singing along. Time flew so quickly, but it all finally ended with a song dedicated to us, the whole crowd, and it was very touching as we sat almost uplifted out of our seats. Then people ran up to the stage trying to catch a close-up view of one of America's top rock groups.

So, that was it, the whole fantastic truth. I've got to go now.

Your friend always,

Jan

Rationale: This is a 4 paper. This paper is organized and flows smoothly from beginning to end. The details are evenly developed.

PY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Greg,

Recently I went to see Led Zeppelin in concert at Washington. We arrived early and the seats were filling up quick. You could feel a mood of excitement in the air as the clock headed for seven. Finally the lights went out and all was dark and quiet. Suddenly I heard a tremendous crash of sounds as lights flashed about the whole place. The band was pretty radical the music was so loud and it was really thrashable they played all my favorite songs the concert lasted three and a half hours. When the last song was playing there was a sad mood in the air like someone had died. We were all so sorry to see it end so soon. I enjoyed it greatly Maybe we can go to a concert together in the future sometime

Yours truly,
Mike

Rationale: This is a 4 paper. Although it is short, it is evenly developed. It has a logical progression of details and is well organized.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Manay,

I just came back from a Sneaky Peak performance. It was great! I arrived two hours early and the place was packed. It wasn't too bad because we brought some cards to waste time. Suddenly, there were colored lights flashing everywhere and the fans were going wild. This was a clue that the concert was starting. Then, during the concert Scott Fulton, the lead singer took off his shirt and threw it at the crowd. Guess what?. I caught it!! At the end of the performance, I went back stage to give his shirt back when he introduced me to everyone in the band and told me to keep the shirt! I had the best time in my life.

Friends Always,

Kristine

Rationale: This is a 4 paper. The writer did what was manageable in a paragraph. She selected what was to her most important about the performance—the lead singer's shirt and carried it through. She has attended to her audience and has some letter format, though the heading is missing.

OPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Peggy

Hi! What is new? I went to the performance this weekend to hear and dance to my favorite musical group. The first thing we did was to find our table. Then the music begin with a loud bang. The crowd was yelling and clapping. I got up and moved to the dance floor with some of my friends. After we were done dancing, we went to the refreshment stand to get something to eat. We took the food back to our table. We listened to the rest of the music from there because we were to tired to dance anymore. We all had a great time. When the performance was over my friends and me went and got their autographs. As we were leaving we kept thnk about what a great time we had. You should of come. Well I got to go now it's getting late.

Your friend,
Melinda

Rationale: This is a 4 paper. It has a clear sequence and sufficient details to explain the sequence. The writer has attended to the specified audience and format, though date is missing. The prewriting suggestions in the prompt guided this writer. ("The first thing we did . . .," "when the performance was over . . .") Though the favorite musical group is not named, this does not interfere. Errors in sentence formation and conventions ("think" instead of "thinking," "should of" instead of "should have") do not interfere with meaning.

Instructional Suggestions: This writer might be encouraged to get more specific. What's the name of the group? Where was your table? Which friends were with you?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 14

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Michelle

about your which group do like now then every I don't no which have time find out which RICKSPringfield Play that song now Along Person to have allowed when have time. then have below to be gord on first day, understand that now. When have Rockgroups with your Parent have fun with him own Place have in now let Beside that when together for. How is your cat She doing fine. anything happen with him DiS. write back. Friends Soon you can now, Going down in Decmen that is clear now, Bestfriend could have together that all said now that truth

your
friend
Julie

SCORE POINT: NSR 5 Incoherent

65

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 15

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear John.
- I just heard a performance. It was all right until the radio fell and broke.

SCORE POINT: NSR 6 Insufficent Response

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 16

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear Randy

Hello! How is the family doing? I had nothing else to do but to write you a letter to tell you about the basketball game on March 21, 1953. It was one of the best games that I have ever been to in a long time. When it first started everybody had their name said and they came out to the middle of the floor. All through the game all you saw was slams, fast passes and quick movement. It was a close game, but the better team came out on top. When the game was over everybody was shaking hands and having fun. Tell Mommy and Daddy I said Hello!

Love You:

SCORE POINT: NSR 8 Off Topic

67

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 17

WRITING TOPIC #1

Dear MR. King:

On april 26 I Suppose to going to Jeffertown, to Watched on him a performance by your favorite musical group. I ejoyed the performance so much that I Want to Share your experience with some one else. Than I Write a letter, telling one of your friends about the performance.

Before I Start Writing I might Want to think about how the performance begun. Think about What happened during the performance and how the performance ended.

After all I Write a letter, telling your friend about the performance of your favorite musical group.

I appreciate your favorit musical group So much and Thank very much to let me Write a letter friend. (Joyed)

YOUR FRIEND

SCORE POINT: NSR 9 Copy of the Prompt

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EXPLANATORY DOMAIN SCORING GUIDE

Score point 1 = These papers typically have insufficient information to complete the writing task. The little information included may be confusing.

- The writing task is attempted.
- An organizational strategy may be attempted.
- Elaboration is not present.
- The audience may not be addressed.
- Errors in sentence formation interfere with meaning and cause confusion.
- Errors in conventions interfere with meaning and cause confusion.

Score point 2 = These papers typically have missing specifics that are needed to complete the task. In addition, information included does not clearly explain the specifics.

- The writing task is addressed.
- An organizational strategy is present but is inconsistent.
- Irrelevant information, if present, interferes with meaning.
- An attempt is made to address the audience.
- Errors in sentence formation, if present, may interfere with meaning.
- Errors in conventions, if present, may interfere with meaning.

Score point 3 = These papers typically have enough information to complete the task. The information is presented clearly.

- The writing task is addressed consistently.
- The organization is clear with few, if any, inconsistencies.
- Irrelevant information, if present, does not interfere with meaning.
- The intended audience is addressed.
- Errors in sentence formation, if present, do not interfere with meaning.
- Errors in conventions, if present, do not interfere with meaning.

Score point 4 = These papers typically have enough or more than enough information to complete the task. The information is presented clearly through specific details.

- The writing task is addressed consistently.
- The organization is clear and controlled.
- All information is relevant.
- The intended audience is addressed.
- Errors in sentence formation, if present, do not interfere with meaning.
- Errors in conventions, if present, do not interfere with meaning.

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS

Now you are to write on Writing Topic #2. To break the seal on Topic #2, fold the strip back and forth along the dotted line. Then carefully tear the strip away from the test booklet.

Write your first draft in pencil using the space provided in your booklet. This first draft will not be scored.

When you finish your first draft, read it over. Use the Writing Revision Checklist to help improve your writing. Then write your final copy on the lined sheet of paper provided in your booklet for Topic #2. You may use handwriting or printing when you write your final copy. Be sure to use a pen and to write clearly so that your work can be read easily. Only the writing on the lined paper will be scored.

When you finish working on Writing Topic #2, close your booklet and wait for further instructions.

Suppose that while going home from school you were the only witness to an accident. Write a report for the police, explaining what happened.

Before you start writing, you might want to think about the information that the police department will need to have. Think about the date, time, and location of the accident. Remember details about any people, vehicles, animals, or property involved in the accident.

Now write a report for the police, explaining what happened in the accident that you witnessed while going home from school.

* *

Use the space below to write your draft of **TOPIC #2.**

WRITING TOPIC #2

the accident Report

I was coming home form in my car and was accident on the South 242 I got out of my car and sad why did it pretty animals and the man herd didn't see the animals I call the police and sad that a man have hit and animails the was sny gril was cry here coming dowing on South 242 hit was sny to the accident the man have to pass ca for the grit little dog that have diet. the never thing we're all over i was very sad at the end.

Rationale: This is a 1 paper because there is evidence the writer saw the prompt and attempted to respond to it. However, the information is garbled and very nearly incoherent.

Instructional Suggestions: This student might be encouraged to build fluency through some oral language activities. Resist the urge to teach correct sentence formation and conventions. Emphasis on correctness at this stage will only inhibit the writer. Short, frequent writing assignments might help this student build fluency with the English language.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #2

I saw the nova come
across the intercestion and
another car was flying
down the road. and I shrid
the nova going about. (2 sy

Rationale: This is a 1 paper. Again, the writer clearly saw the prompt and attempted to respond to it. The paper receives a 1 because the information is vague and details are missing.

Instructional Suggestions: This writer needs to be encouraged to tell more about the accident. Brainstorming specific details would help. Another way to elicit specific details is to list all the questions a reader might have. Which Nova? What intersection? What other car? What road? When?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 3

WRITING TOPIC #2

It happened at 3:43 P.M. At the corner of Weller Rd and Goodhill. The blue car was coming down Weller rd. slow. the red car ran the stop sign at Goodhill and ran into the car. It was the red cars fault.

Rationale: This is a "bare bones" 2. There are details and the accident is described, but there is very little elaboration of the incident. The little information included is organized.

Instructional Suggestions: This writer also needs help with prewriting. Generating specific details about what happened would improve this paper.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #2

Today after school at 2:30 I saw these two volkswagons run into each other but the red car was a red light and ran into the green car and the man got out the green car and laid on the ground and his dog followed him and then they called the police and the ambulance came to pick up the man in the green car and then they pushed the cars to the side of the road and then the tow truck came to get the cars and the man in the red car caught a cab home after they filled out the accident report.

Rationale: This is a 2 paper. Although the paper has details with some elaboration, there is irrelevant information as well as missing information. In addition, the writer simply strings one post-accident detail after another.

Instructional Suggestions: This paper could be improved if the student used the same information in grammatically complete sentences. Sentence combining activities might help this student learn a variety of ways to coordinate ideas. Again, missing information might be found by listing questions a reader might have after reading this paper. Where did this happen? What about the dog?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #2

The accident happened about 3:00 p.m. on 2.6.83 A pickup truck and a car were involved in an accident at the intersection off of Maple street. The truck was coming out to the intersection and he didnt see the red light and swerved into the car that was going up the road.

Rationale: This is a 2 paper. The basic details needed to report the accident are present. However, the situation is vague and somewhat confusing.

Instructional Suggestions: This student has reported a specific when and a rather general what and where. Where "off of Maple Street"? Which car "was going up the road"? The lack of specific detail contributes to the vagueness of this paper. Brainstorming specific details for this general report would help. The capitalization error might be a careless error, but simply asking the student would let the teacher know.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #2

I was on my way home from school Friday June 5, 1982. It was about 2:30 pm. I heard tires of a car. I looked up an saw a blue camaro had just peeled out of apartments (Jamestown). Right behind it came a red duster which apperred to be chasing him. It pulled up beside the camaro and forced it off the road, into a ditch. The driver looked hurt so I ran to 7223 Denver st. and called the fire squad.

Rationale: This paper is a low 3. It has all the necessary information and elaborates on some of the details. Although it is short and concise, it is well organized. Specific information moves this paper into the 3 category.

Instructional Suggestions: This writer has reported the complete accident, but more elaboration of the details would enhance this paper. Also, attention to some of the minor spelling and capitalization errors would improve the paper.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 7

WRITING TOPIC #2

well the date of the accident was 9/1/82. The time was about 3:30 Pm. Location was at Franklin and Johnathan streets. The man driving the Z28 ran the red light and hit the lady driving a green station wagon. The man in the Z28 was dark complexed, and had brown hair He fled from the accident after. it happened his license plate number was EKL-007. The lady in the Station wagon had blond hair, and was also dark complexed She was past out at the time. Her car was in pretty bad Shape. The doors on her side was smashed in. The Z28 was in pretty bad shape to. But like I said he left from the accident. And thats really all I cant tell you.

Rationale: This is a 3 paper because it has a sufficient number of specific details. In addition, there is an organizational strategy at work. However, the accident itself is somewhat vague.

Instructional Suggestions: This writer has included specific details about the where, when and who of the accident. The what, however, is not clearly explained. ("The man driving the Z28 ran the red light and hit the lady driving a green station wagon.") Questioning the writer might elicit more information. Which direction? Which car was where?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #2

Police Report: September 7, 1982; 7:00 PM

On September 7, 1982 at approximately 3:05 pm a navy Blue van headed east on Route 108 in Highland, Maryland in the left hand lane struck a black motorcycle.

The van is a 1981 navy Blue Ford with Maryland plate "Cousin" It has a dented right front wheel well and a dragging muffler. The truck has a trailer hitch and CB Antenna on the rear. The antenna has a Raccoon tail hanging from it. It has mirrored side windows and rear tinted windows, the front is tinted heavily. The driver was not visible.

The Motorcycle was a black chopper-style Harley davidson, 1978-88 model with large tail pipes and High Back seat. License plates are California XAC 7963 motorcycle. The driver wore a "Hells Angels" leather jacket, leather silver studded gloves and chains around the shoulder, large boots and Blue jeans, No Helmet. He is a large build, white male, 25-30 years old, dark hair and Beard.

The truck struck the motorcyclist sending him from his motorcycle into a white picket fence approximately 15 feet away. The van was travelling 75-80 miles per hour in the left hand lane apparently drunk. The motorcyclist swerved out of the way but too late. A hitch hiker was struck by the van just seconds after the cyclist and kept on going towards Route 32 apparently.

Rationale: This is a 3 paper. It has a wealth of specific, elaborated details. However, the organization is weak. The last paragraph begins to confuse the actual accident.

Instructional Suggestions: This writer should be commended for the many specific, elaborated details that are appropriate for his accident report. Attention should be focused on improving the last paragraph. What actually happened? Reorganizing the information included in the last paragraph might help clarify the situation.

79 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WRITING TOPIC #2

To whom it may Concern,

On the evening of April 26, 1983 I was walking home from school. It was about 4:00 pm and I was standing at the corner at the Harford Mall. I saw a Dark blue pickup try to hurry the light. The light turned red but he kept driving. Then I saw a small green Toyota pulling out. The truck was trying to stop, but it was too late. The truck hit the car behind the driver's seat. The Toyota was badly damaged but the pickup just drove away from the scene. The pickup had a dented front end. I did get the licence plate number. It was a Maryland tag. The number was AJK-125. I called an ambulance and a tow truck. When the tow truck and ambulance arrived they said that only the person in the drivers seat survived. There were 2 other people in the car. The licence plate was a Maryland tag. The number was BCK-352. I hope that my information could be helpful. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Rationale: This is a 4 paper. It is well organized and clearly written. All necessary information is included. There is a wealth of specific details and the accident is clearly, but simply described.

...T COPY AVAILABLE

No. 10

WRITING TOPIC #2

November 30, 1982

At 3:00 on Nov. 21, 1982 I was walking home for school. At the corner of Elm and 1st St. I saw a little boy start to cross the street without looking. At the same time I saw a lady in a Blue Valiant come up Elm Street. The lady saw the boy and slammed on the brakes. Even though she swerved she still could not avoid the boy. The boy hit the front of the car, smashed into the windshield, and flew over the roof onto the road. The lady stopped the car and went to the boy. She told me the boy was hurt badly and to go call an ambulance. I ran to some peoples house and called an ambulance and the police. When the police arrived they asked me some question and told me I could go home.

Rationale: This is a 4 paper. It is an evenly elaborated and well developed paper.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 11

WRITING TOPIC #2

Dear Police
What is your job is about is it hard to do.

SCORE POINT: NSR 6 Insufficient Response

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 12

WRITING TOPIC #2

To who it may concern,

I live on Charley Forest street in Olney Mill, and I would like to make a ~~complaint~~ complaint on the speeding on Olney Mill Road. The speed limit on this road is 25 miles per hour and people are ~~going~~ driving thier cars up to 50 and 60 miles per hour. I would like to see more radars up so that people can walk safely on the road again.

Thankyou,
Nichelle

SCORE POINT: NSR 8 Off Topic

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 13

WRITING TOPIC #2

Suppose going home from school you only the witness to accident report the police Explaining what happened your writing before you might want to think about information the police will need to have the date and proper Location Remember the accident details animals involved in the accident Now a police Explaining in accident witnessed going home from school.

SCORE POINT: NSR 9 Copy of the Prompt

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

No. 14

WRITING TOPIC #2

Dear Police Chief,

This is my version of accident.

SCORE POINT: NSR 10 Refusal to Write

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

USING TEST RESULTS

The MFWT results have at least three uses for administrators and supervisors. They

- Serve as a base for evaluating existing writing programs
- Provide a stimulus for changing or creating writing programs
- Present an occasion for school-community exchange.

Evaluating Programs

Analysis of test scores and what they say about a writing program is a first step in evaluation. Subsequent steps bring other information to bear. Writing samples direct attention to areas of strength and weakness. Composition folders can be used to monitor student progress within a program. Observation of students engaged in writing is an excellent source of information. And, of course, asking students to discuss their writing yields honest and immediate answers about what is difficult, what is enjoyable.

Stimulating Changes in Programs

Often, such evaluation yields information which can be used as the basis for improving or, in schools where writing instruction has not been co-ordinated, for creating a composition program. In this effort, wise use of evaluative material enables administrators to retain instructional approaches which are working, to integrate strategies designed to strengthen or flesh out a program, and to do long-term planning and goal-setting. In this process, administrators can and should make use of the many excellent resources available to them:

- Teachers within the school or system who have developed good lessons and materials
- Current literature, available through NCTE, NASSP
- Local writing projects
- Local community college writing lab projects.

Sharing with the Community

The third use administrators can make of MFWT results is in presenting to parents and community both the test and the school's writing program. There are three occasions when school/community exchange can be particularly helpful:

- Before the MFWT is administered
- When test results are published
- When a writing program has been evaluated.

Before the MFWT is administered, parents should have a fair idea of the rationale for competency testing in general. They should understand that the MFWT measures a child's progress toward the state's functional writing goals. Finally, they should be made familiar with the format of the test.

When test results are published, parents need to know what the scores mean and what the school will do with them. Parents should be encouraged to seek help or information from guidance counselors.

When a writing program has been evaluated and when evaluation results are used to change the program, parents and the community at large should be well informed. Support in the community for what is being done in the school goes a long way toward giving teachers and students a sense that what they are doing is understood and appreciated.

Whenever communication with the non-school community is called for, administrators have several forums to make use of:

- Regularly scheduled PTSA meetings
- Special parent meetings
- Teacher demonstrations
- Regular newsletters
- Special bulletins (particularly useful when they actually accompany test results)
- Local newspapers.

School systems should also consider the access they might have to radio and television. Non-print media provide public service news and information.

In addition to the non-school community, there is a large in-school community which must be provided with information about the MFWT and the teaching of writing: all teachers whose subject area is not English language arts.

Writing Across the Curriculum

While the development of writing programs traditionally has been the responsibility of English departments, in fact all teachers require students to write. Because they do, they are or should be involved in the teaching of writing. As soon as science teachers assign a one-page essay contrasting mitosis and meiosis, they have prescribed a writing form, given a topic, and chosen a length. When they evaluate the essay, mark misspellings and missing commas, they exclaim "This kid can't write!"

A school system is reponsible for helping content teachers whose training has not included the teaching of composition. Teachers will benefit if the administrator encourages the following activities.

1. Educating the staff about how the writing process works
   - In a short series of faculty meetings, led by the school's English department or, if that is not possible, by central office English personnel
   - In a faculty bulletin question and answer column
   - In a school idea-exchange bulletin.

Teaching writing as a process is new even to many English teachers. Administrators can probably safely assume that very few other teachers are now familiar with the concept.

2. Helping the staff to differentiate writing as a way of learning from writing as a means of testing. Many teachers require students to prepare papers, reports, and essay answers, all of which are dependent upon the student's being fairly competent writers. A student who knows content but cannot express it in writing may be penalized by a teacher who has not learned to view content as separate from its expression and who views the writing process as inherently a testing tool.

3. Creating a staff support system by identifying strong teachers of writing and enlisting their help in aiding colleagues in all disciplines to be teachers of writing.

4. Synchronizing schedules of major assignments (term papers, research reports, projects). Teachers can co-ordinate schedules so students won't have more writing than they can handle at one time.

5. Co-ordinating efforts to teach writing skills. A science class may learn paragraph development by the use of contrast while a history teacher leads a class through developing a paragraph by reasons.

Student writers are beneficiaries of such cross-curricular involvement in the teaching of writing. Obviously, the more opportunities they have to write and the greater the variety of their writing experiences, the more skill they gain in writing. In receiving directed writing assignments, students learn to write for differing audiences, with different purposes, and in varied formats. Through it all, the student gains a sense of value for writing as a life skill.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cowan, Elizabeth. "Student Centered Teaching and Industrial Management Theory," *Th. Language Arts Curriculum Models: Pre-Kindergarten through College*. (ed.) Barrett J. Mandel. Urbana, Illinois: NCTE, 1980.

Graser, Elsa. *Teaching Writing: A Process Approach*. Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1983.

Healy, Mary K. *Using Student Writing Response Groups in the Classroom*. Curriculum Publication No. 12. Berkeley, California: Bay Area Writing Project, 1980.

Maimon, Elaine P. and others. *Writing in Arts and Sciences*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Winthrop Publishing Co., 1981.

Murray, Donald. *A Writer Teaches Writing: A Practical Method of Teaching Composition*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1968.

Winterowd, W. Ross. *The Contemporary Writer: A Practical Rhetoric*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975.